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The role of women in the economic value creation has not been recognised and given as much attention as it deserves. Whether it is providing moral support to the male partners to pursue their careers/professions, supplementing family income due to dire necessities or pursuing corporate careers — in every scenario that leads to economic value creation, woman has been playing a valuable role. While until recently, women were predominantly contented with playing the supportive role in economic value creation, over the last decade, there has been a dramatic change in the number of women who have entered into the Indian corporate world. According to NASSCOM by the year 2010, the ratio of men to women in the IT/BPO sector would be 65:35.

Also, a study done by Watson Wyatt that the younger generation of women in India is expected to achieve educational parity with men by 2016. With everything being equal, increasingly corporate recruiters are keen to hire more women graduates from Business Schools recognizing the unique characteristics of women — empathy, flexibility and persistence that are enablers for successful management practices.

As a result of the increasing number of women entering into the corporate portals many of whom unlike in the past do not consider the opportunity to work as a short term phenomenon but are focused on building long term careers, a new corporate culture is evolving which calls for new approaches to management, development and retention. Fundamentally there is a need for corporate leadership to understand the new ‘identity’ of the corporate women, their aspirations and put in place new management practices to keep pace with the change in gender ratio and the resultant work environment.

The current issue of NHRD Network Journal is an attempt to provide an insight on various dimensions that have an influence on the careers of women in the corporate sector with focus on Leadership Roles. This Special edition comprises of a combination of articles by industry professionals, researchers and academicians as well as interviews with a cross section of women leaders and book reviews all focused around the women's leadership issues.

Through interviews, the journal attempts to capture rich experiences of women leaders from various walks — an institution builder, an entrepreneur, an educationalist, a bureaucrat and a social entrepreneur and presented them in appropriate sections. Sister Nirmala as a close associate of Mother Teresa for decades shares her thoughts. Vinita Singhania hailing from business community and married to an industrialist attained leadership roles with a challenge to excel in each role. Nirmala Prasad as a leader of a well established women’s educational institution has been closely watching and mentoring a number of women leaders for more than three decades. Sabitha has been successfully balancing her role in an environment with multiple pressures including from political quarters, successfully navigating her way through. Vandana speaks from her rich experience of building an institution for the underprivileged women, with its associated pleasures and pains.

The first section — Women Leaders — explores the factors that have enabled successful women leaders to reach the top. Often there is a debate about what is the right leadership style and if there has to be a difference if it is a woman and further if there are differences leadership styles in the ‘for profit’ vs ‘not-for profit’ scenarios. This section raises some interesting questions around these debates and provides useful perspectives to appreciate why women ‘lead’ differently and more importantly how they have learned to adapt from with evolving times.

For every successful woman leader, there are many who do not make it to the top. The fundamental reason for this is on account of a significant number of women who are unable to balance work and family requirements and are forced to abandon corporate careers in preference to home needs.

What has been found to be most helpful is to have Role Models around who could inspire them and specially during difficult times, help them remain steadfast with their goals. At times Role Models may not exist in their own organisations and may not be approachable. Therefore the role of mentors in nurturing women talent become important. Mentoring has been of late a much sought after tool to groom leaders and the same tool could be used in the context of women effectively. Listening, counseling and coaching have found to be helping women specially when
they have to battle on their own in unchartered territories and with wise and timely counsel how they manage to get past the hurdles in their careers has been described by authors in the second section.

In order to build a successful career, focus, vision, planning and persistence are essential. While these are important ingredients for career planning for anyone, this process assumes significance for women, especially since many of them would be treading on the paths where their mothers and peers may not have done so and therefore would not be able to rely on experiences of others. Even today choice for education streams are made in India more by peer pressure and societal pressures than by recognizing one’s true potential and talent. Very often women tend to wander into the corporate world as ‘Alice in wonderland’ not fully equipped to deal with the expectations and the realities of the corporate world. This section examines the challenges involved in making the right career decision and the attention to self development in pursuit of career goals.

One of the objectives of this Special Edition is also to help readers understand the profile of the modern woman. Society has created stereotypes and there are some deep rooted myths about working women which the authors have explored and have tried to present the realistic picture in the section ‘Myths and Realities of scaling heights.’ Women achievers in the corporate domain differ from those who have chosen to be Entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneurs are setting up businesses of their own at various stages of life because of a variety of reasons — independence, flexibility, desire to make a difference and making money. Entrepreneurship brings in its wake associated risks and joys. The section on Entrepreneurship also outlines how women embrace risks with boldness and surmount the challenges with dedication to cause and achievement orientation.

With women increasing in the workforce, managing the gender diversity is a new challenge for business leaders. This calls for new policies, new mindsets and new work ethics. Several organizations now have in developed ‘women friendly’ policies with the objective of attracting and retaining women in large numbers. In the section on Gender Diversity, authors have examined the issues around how to facilitate gender diversity and case studies of organizations such as Wipro and IBM give interesting insights of how large corporates have been sensitive and responsive towards women’s needs.

The final subject that has been examined relates to women in global organizations and the newly emerging management cultures thereof. Are women leaders in the East very different from those in the West? Women from both these worlds have had opportunities to interact with women in different parts of the globe and also work in geographies that are not native to them. In such cross border scenarios, how successful have women been in adapting to different cultures and what are their observations about the work ethics are some of the questions that have been addressed in this section.

In putting together this Special Edition on Corporate Women, we have not restricted the contributions to only from women but we have reached out to authors of both sexes to get the benefit of both their perspectives. Our objective has been to knit together their collective experiences, insights and observations on Corporate Indian women. Also we attempted to encourage young authors to contribute. We hope our readers would have useful takeaways by reading this journal and would write to us about their thoughts and ideas on how we could make the corporate world a more gender diversified place to work.

Dr. PVR Murthy
Editor and on behalf of the Editorial Team

Dr. Uma Ganesh
(Guest Editor for this Issue)

Dr. Uma Ganesh Natarajan is the Chief Corporate Development Officer of HSBC Global Resourcing a member of the Executive Board of NHRD Network.
A WOMAN'S CORPORATE DHARMA - TOWARDS SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP

GANESH NATARAJAN

Abstract

To enable outstanding women leaders to develop and sustain the movement in all types of organizations, it is necessary to develop a corporate ‘dharma’ for women - a way of life and work which will determine their attitude towards work and home and enable them to develop a deeper philosophical manifesto that will stand them in good stead as they encounter expected and unanticipated pockets of turbulence and head winds on their flight to the stars of corporate success. The unique circumstances that surround the Indian woman and the inherent contradictions and challenge that face them everyday have prepared them to cope with the new challenges better than their male counterparts who typically have a much more protected and pampered home environment. In this essay on ‘dharma’ the leadership challenges that prevail today and the leadership style changes that are demanded of all incumbent and aspiring leaders are analysed in detail. A code of conduct or ‘corporate dharma’ is also proposed that will enable women leaders to thrive beyond their own wildest expectations.

About the author

Dr. Ganesh Natarajan is Deputy Chairman and Managing Director of Zensar Technologies Limited. Ganesh has been one of the most successful professionals in the Indian Information Technology Industry, having been part of two major success stories in IT Training and Consulting, NIIT and APTECH. Ganesh is the current Chairman of NASSCOM and is the author of three McGraw Hill Books on Business Process Reengineering and Knowledge Management. He has been penning many articles on the Indian IT Industry. Ganesh is a Gold Medalist in Mechanical Engineering and Industrial Engineering, an alumnus of Harvard Business School and a PhD from IIT Bombay. Ganesh’s current Research interests are Inspirational Leadership and Knowledge Management Maturity and he is helping many Corporations and Governments worldwide in planning and implementing these initiatives.

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omebody once said that the best women leaders are those who never experience the need to show that they are more "man" than the men around them and also do not resort to the stereotypical womanly attributes of excessive warmth or emotions to get their job done. In a country where women as leaders have come to stay and have indeed received far more acceptability than in many of the more "developed" nations, one of whom is struggling with the prospect of electing their first female President, all Indians can be proud of the achievements of Anu Aga, Naina Lal Kidwai, Lalita Gupte and their ilk and pave the way for many more legions of women to shatter the glass ceiling and assume leadership roles in business.
To enable outstanding women leaders to develop and sustain the movement in all types of organizations, it is necessary to develop a corporate dharma for women - a way of life and work which will determine their attitude towards work and home and enable them to develop a deeper philosophical manifesto that will stand them in good stead as they encounter expected and unanticipated pockets of turbulence and head winds on their flight to the stars of corporate success.

In this essay on dharma we will first analyse the leadership challenges that prevail today and the leadership style changes that are demanded of all incumbent and aspiring leaders. We will argue that the unique circumstances that surround the Indian woman and the inherent contradictions and challenge that face them everyday have prepared them to cope with the new challenges better than their male counterparts who typically have a much more protected and pampered home environment. And finally we will develop a code of conduct or "corporate dharma" that will enable women leaders to thrive beyond their own wildest expectations.

The Challenges Of Leadership

The leadership style that was prevalent in the traditional hierarchies of large manufacturing firms like General Motors and Ford and indeed in a Tata Motors or Hindustan Lever has been based on the premise that an industry segment is well defined and a Porter "five forces" analysis can be done once and will remain fairly consistent over a prolonged period of time - classical manufacturing firms defined their products after detailed market research, developed long term strategies for differentiation and market access and mapped their competitors to figure out where and how they could win the battles for the marketplace.

Organizations were built using simple principles of command and control and respect for hierarchy and unity of command were taken as the basic ethos for workflow and decision making in the organizations. Exceptional situations were dealt with by committees but the day to day operations were invariably handled by well defined functions that would cluster all the way to the top of the organization. The focus was always on breaking down objectives into clearly defined tasks with the focus being on "getting the task done". Exceptional performance was rarely required and seldom delivered and the work study and time study approaches of the original fathers of industrial engineering, Frederick Winslow Taylor and Frank Bunker Gilbreth ensured that norms were set and followed in most tasks within the organization.

Information sharing in the classical leadership style was purely on a "need to know" basis and the leader would not be pleased at any employee "going the extra mile" or moving out of her comfort zone to perform tasks meant for others. The performance management systems in this era also relied on seniority and years of experience as the predominant criteria for recognition and rewards. I still remember my early innings in a classical Indian firm of this genre where the grade and possibly even the salary of a manager could be determined by the type of table and chair assigned to him, the frequency with which coffee was served to him and his visitors, and to top it all, even the washroom that he was allowed to use. "The keys to the executive washroom" may have been a creation of the British, but prevailed in many Indian firms way past the "sell by" date that such archaic customs surely deserved.

The Style Adaptations Demanded Of Leaders

What has changed in the current context? For one the traditional organizations,
which were manufacturing and distribution oriented have given way in popularity to the new services sectors - it is consulting, information technology, business process outsourcing, retail and financial services firms which jostle for Day One or even Day Zero on prestigious management campuses. A case in point is the top icon of management education, the Harvard Business School where hedge funds and a search firm called Google have overtaken the Mckinseys and Merril Lynches at the top of the totem pole of MBA aspirations. The manufacturing firms too have evolved to some degree and the "manager by right" concept has given way to some form of meritocracy where performance is seen as an important criterion for success and movement up the hierarchy.

The difficulty for many of us who have started our careers in the old construct of the management and leadership paradigm and have now learnt to cope in the new milieu is that many of the old tricks that we had learnt have to be unlearnt and a new model of leadership constructed in our own minds and put to practice in our organizations. Some of the paradigm shifts that we have to make are

- Its no longer about competition but about collaboration whereby the value networks we can create truly determine our success in the marketplace

- The fight for market share which was valid in stable markets with predictable consumer behaviour is slowly being replaced by what Hamel and Prahlad called "opportunity share" - the case of Google which built a mega corporation by monetizing a new opportunity or indeed of e-Bay, Amazon and a host of other successes of the internet era.

- The need to understand, reengineer and manage end to end business processes rather than the erstwhile functional fiefdoms in traditional organizations. For example order fulfilment needs to be optimised not planning or purchasing or receiving, integral though they may be to the process.

- Planning around outcomes and not tasks and hence changing the orientation from input to output.

- Managing through relationships rather than rules particularly in industry segments like IT where there are very few customer-vendor relationships or employer-employee lines but much more of collaborative relationships.

- Shift in focus for people from specialising in one task to becoming multi-skilled with the ability to multitask and cope with ever changing business and market challenges.

- Evolution in management style from command and control and order giving to consensus decision making and taking people along in the process of reaching desired outcomes.

- The move from a "need to know" approach to communications to a genuine "need to share" philosophy that ensures that every stakeholder feels an integral part of the business.

- A cultural shift from looking for answers to searching for questions which enables analysis and discussion before firm decisions are taken.

And in this apparent smorgasbord of conflicting business and relationship needs walks in the modern Indian woman - and what a transformation that brings! Read on

**The Characteristics of Women**

Indian women have adopted so many roles in their own lives before entering the
portals of the corporate world that the style flexibility which is the essence of leadership today is almost ingrained in their psyche. The very different needs of daughter, sister, niece, friend, fiancée, wife, daughter in law and mother at least some of which roles the woman would have played before taking up a job and almost inevitably all the roles before progressing to managerial and leadership echelons provide the annealing fires that temper the new leader’s approach to any situation and enable inner strength combined with outer empathy to present facets of leadership that would be the envy of most men.

The ability to develop, sustain and nurture multiple relationships with subordinates colleagues and bosses who each have different ego needs is probably something any woman finds it easiest to demonstrate. Add to that the need to negotiate collaborative alliances with key stakeholders including stubborn peers and obdurate team members, the need for empathy at all times and the patience required to win over reluctant colleagues and conjure up a win-win from a seemingly hopeless situation and you have a corporate work situation where women can thrive and succeed in spite of multiple odds.

The inherent self confidence that all women, particularly young women entering the corporate world from business schools carry and their natural belief in empowerment and not power as the true formula for success enables women to build relationships at all levels and achieve their goals with minimum fuss and maximum effect. One significant difference with women which gives them a lead over their male counterparts is the reduced need to seek approval and the willingness to manage with limited or suboptimal resources which is the hallmark of all great leaders in times of relative adversity and resource constraints.

Of course, it would be stretching a point to say that all women have the perfect mental make-up to succeed in what continues to be predominantly a man’s world! In our organization where we have encouraged women to aspire and achieve all levels our leadership, there continue to be some exceptions where women, seemingly having everything going for them in terms of intellect, capability and commitment, fall apart due to emotional stresses and fall into the trap of using tears and sulks as their own private defence mechanism against accusations of weakness or weak results. But the good news is that for every women who succumbs to the need to expose emotional frailty rather than play to her strengths, there are half a dozen others who stand up to be counted, weather the vicissitudes of fortune and irrational behaviour on the part of clients or colleagues and stay the course to demonstrate their capability and willingness to succeed.

Building the "Corporate dharma"

So what is the code of conduct that modern Indian women can adopt to succeed in the corporate world - there may be some nuances of the "corporate dharma" that may be crafted differently for leadership aspirants in each sector for the challenges of a leader in the more traditional manufacturing or banking segment cannot be the same as that of a CEO aspirant in the "new economy" sectors of IT, BPO and Retail given the very different lineages of each industry segment. In an more general sense however, a broad seven point dharma crafted in the style of the Ten Commandments would read…..

1. Thou shall show confidence in all situations and relationships - display of
weakness will enable others to bully thee and get their way.

2. Thou shall not let people or events get you down - thou shall keep thy cool and use logic to find a better way.

3. Thy strength is flexibility - practise it all times. Look for the paths less travelled and let thy intuition guide thee to the right way.

4. Thou shall not take recourse to tears - by doing so thou shall evoke sympathy or scorn and lose respect in the eyes of thy peers.

5. It does not behove thee to try to behave like a man - rejoice in thy womanhood and let that help thee to prevail.

6. Use common sense that thou has in abundance and empathy to understand a situation from all angles - and take thine own decisions!

7. Keep the determination to succeed high at all times and be steadfast on the path thou hast chosen - and thine will be done.

It is the karma of women to succeed in any field of human endeavour - let’s hope this dharma will hasten the process!
WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES: AN AGENDA FOR CHANGE

DEEPTI BHATNAGAR

Abstract

This article examines the issue of women in leadership roles. Presenting research evidence which shows that presence of women in top leadership roles is accompanied by superior organizational performance, it asks the question why we still find women in small numbers in senior and top positions. It examines attitudinal and systemic barriers to women’s advancement and suggests some ways to overcome them. While women need to become more proactive, for any meaningful organizational change to occur, top management and HR professionals need to work together.

About the author

Dr. Deepti Bhatnagar is Professor of Organizational Behaviour at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad. She has been on the IIM-A faculty, a Visiting Professor of Management at the University of Maryland, USA and the Fairleigh Dickinson University, USA. Before joining IIM-A as faculty, she worked with industry for five years. She has published in leading international and Indian journals. She has been a consultant to the Commonwealth Secretariat, World Health Organization, Interman, Geneva, the World Bank Washington DC, and various organizations in the Indian corporate sector.

With increasing education, changing social norms, and growing aspirations among women, recent years have seen a surge of working women in India, many of them in professional roles. Compared to the past, the number of professional women entering organizations in different functions, departments, and different industries has increased. Despite obvious limitations of generalizations, broadly speaking it can be observed that the presence of women is more noticeable in some sectors (such as Information Technology, Biotechnology, and Banking), functions (such as Human Resources, personnel and administration) and states (such as Karnataka and Maharashtra) compared to elsewhere. However, even in these relatively more ‘women-friendly’ contexts, women occupy much more the entry-level and middle management positions than the truly challenging leadership roles at senior and top levels. A few women who reach the top are acclaimed for their contribution as leaders, but most of the women tend to remain at the middle level in organizations. Is the phenomenon of concentration of women at lower levels and women’s relative absence at the top special to India due to its unique combination of cultural and social factors? Or is it global?

Contributing Women, Unappreciative Organizations?

Objectively speaking, given their growing presence at the workplace, with passage of time, the sizable number of women should...
be acquiring relevant exposure, experience, skill sets and perspective to reach positions of leadership, and should be moving into corporate leadership roles. However, academic studies as well as the corporate reality show a global dearth of women in leadership positions. Intriguingly enough, number of women entrepreneurs is increasing faster than the women in top positions in organizations. According to the US Census Bureau Report (1996), American women owned one-third of all US businesses employing about 26 per cent of country’s workforce. Women-owned businesses in the US continue to create more jobs than the Fortune 500 US firms worldwide!

Yet, a recent survey of Fortune 1000 firms which examined women’s place in the executive pipeline to the top found that 50% of the firms did not have any women in senior and top positions; in organizations which had women, their presence indicated a mere ‘token’ status; and as a result of the above two, the number of women in the pipeline to top positions, though showing an improvement over the past, continues to be small. Extrapolating based on the present trends, by 2016, only about 6 percent of CEOs in the Fortune 1000 companies would be women!

This is a discouraging scenario if we view it against the backdrop of a growing number of women acquiring professional qualifications and entering corporations. It becomes particularly disturbing when viewed in the light of women’s positive contribution to organizational performance. Numerous studies have reported a positive correlation between the presence of women in corporate leadership roles in senior and top positions, and superior financial performance of the organization. To cite a few, a study of 215 Fortune 500 companies spread over two decades compared the financial performance of those companies to industry means and reported a strong correlation between the number of female senior executives and firm profitability. The Conference Board of Canada has found a noticeable effect of women on the functioning of the board leading to superior corporate results. It was discovered that the presence of women on boards brought different experiences, skill sets and perspectives which enriched the quality of debate and ultimately resulted in superior strategic direction and organizational performance. While exploring different aspects of corporate governance, researchers in the UK recently reported clear evidence that better managed companies … are those that have women on their boards.

Enterprises employing women as well as management thinkers increasingly believe

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that the unique characteristics, sensitivities, soft skills and the ‘interactive management’ styles that women bring to bear on their leadership roles are indeed the requirements for the successful global leaders. There are also a few instances of women achievers and smart CEOs globally and in India, who have raised the bar for leadership excellence. When we consider the suitability of women’s flexible managerial style for leadership roles, and the empirical evidence of women’s noticeable contribution to organizations in leadership positions, and weigh it against their actual miniscule presence in leadership roles, what emerges is an intriguing picture with several questions. Some of the key questions are: What factors prevent talented women from rising to senior and top positions in organizations? If organizations are aware of women’s capability to contribute as leaders, why are women not sought out for such roles? What can women and organizations, specifically the HR professionals do to harness the talents of women in leadership roles? We will briefly examine them, and then focus on the contribution the HR professional can make in this regard.

Leadership Roles and Women
Professional women need to embark on their careers in organizations with confidence in their capability and a strong commitment to self growth. They should not only possess, but demonstrate unambiguously eagerness to accept challenging assignments and leadership responsibilities. Each such assignment should be regarded as an opportunity to learn and grow. It helps to have an open mind, and remain alert to opportunities presenting themselves as leadership challenges. Because they know they are more visible due to their small numbers, women are occasionally reluctant to accept an assignment unless they are hundred per cent sure of making a success of it. A blend of judicious risk-taking, hard work and willingness to learn about leadership by stepping into that role can be useful. It is equally useful to develop mentors and strong informal networks so as to seek and provide mutual support, and access to vital information in real time. Professional women should view their careers strategically, and proactively seek out or demand developmental opportunities such as difficult assignments, unfamiliar contexts and markets, foreign exposure, leadership development programs, etc., early in their careers.

While being part of a traditional society like India might have ingrained in women the need to accommodate others’ needs and priorities and to sacrifice their self-interests, for success in their leadership role, women need to develop a healthy concern for their own interests and to move from self-effacing stance to an assertive style of leadership which combines respect for oneself with respect for others. Interestingly, many studies have shown that though assertiveness is distinctly preferred as a desirable style for leaders, people react negatively when women leaders act in assertive ways. This is a possibility that women leaders need to be prepared for.

Also, professional women can develop a community of sisterhood for mutual support and enhancement. Women in senior and top leadership roles need to remember their responsibility to spot, encourage, groom and retain talent irrespective of gender. Women in such senior and powerful leadership positions should invest time in playing the role of mentors for bright and talented but inexperienced young women.

Women in Leadership Roles: Organizations’ Agenda for Action
According to surveys, women managers feel that major barriers to their rise to
Corporate leadership are: male stereotyping, exclusion of women from informal networks, and women’s family responsibilities, whereas according to male managers, women not being in the pipeline long enough and women’s family responsibilities are the greatest barriers for women. Lack of mentoring, ignorance of workplace politics, lack of knowledge of policies and procedures, and inhospitable organizational culture are regarded as additional barriers. These perceptions indicate that organizations, particularly their HR departments, have a key role to play in ensuring greater presence of women in the leadership pipeline.

Increasingly, there is an intentional consciousness in Indian corporations to recruit women executives. There is a growing appreciation of advantages of diversity and organizations are realizing that it is better to be merit-oriented and look for talent, irrespective of whether it comes from a man or a woman. However, such awareness and objectivity is more manifest at the recruitment stage where parameters for talent are easier to list and spot, and managerial decisions are under heavy scrutiny.

When it comes to subsequent decisions like allocation of challenging assignments, prestigious postings, promotions, membership of powerful committees, meetings with senior corporate leaders, etc., women begin to get sidelined. There are unchecked, and often false, assumptions such as women are unwilling to travel for work or to attend executive development programs, or to undertake tough assignments, and tasks requiring heavy involvement and responsibility. Many times baseless beliefs abound regarding women’s lack of physical stamina, or emotional resilience, which block their entry into the fast track career path reserved for ambitious and competent men.

Organizations need to realize that it is in their own interest to correct these attitudinal biases against women and create fair opportunities for growth of their talented members, their gender notwithstanding. HR professionals need to play a proactive role to identify roadblocks to women’s smooth entry into senior and top leadership roles in their organizations and should lead the way in dismantling the obstacles, whether attitudinal or systemic. HR can initiate gender leadership audit to diagnose the major obstacles and come up with suitable interventions to overcome them. While each organization ought to develop and adopt an action plan based on its own unique configuration of requirements, promoting women leaders needs to be high on organizational agenda.

**Women-In-Leadership Audit**

The Women In Leadership (WIL) Audit can start by reviewing HR policies and practices to ensure fairness in salaries, hiring policies and practices, challenging placement and exposure opportunities, international assignments, history of promotions to senior and top leadership positions, maternity and paternity leave rules, family friendly policies and affirmative action plans including career paths for young mothers’ re-entry into professional roles. Surveys can bring to light important aspects of informal culture such as traditions, norms, perceptions about career commitment, expectations and subtle behaviours which might be jeopardizing women’s upward movement and inclusion in leadership roles. Surveys can also help identify internal good practices which need to be bolstered and organizational support systems such as dependable child care facilities which need to be installed or strengthened.

A WIL audit can help the HR develop a roadmap for change. Action plan should begin with obtaining top management’s
visible commitment to talent management including rightful place for talented women in senior and top leadership positions. Functional managers need to be made accountable for advancement of talented women by its inclusion in their performance criteria. Workshops need to be conducted to generate awareness about importance of talent management, and elimination of gender biases.

**Conclusion**

Women need to be supported in their career development efforts. Through focus group discussions including men and women, ideas can be generated about new organizational initiatives. Access of women to leadership development experiences and training programmes should be enhanced and women's participation should be actively facilitated and encouraged. If the low participation rate of women managers in the Management Development Programmes of the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (14% in 2006-07, and this includes women's participation in 'For women only' programmes also!) is any indicator, HR professionals can do a lot by creating developmental budgets and leadership development opportunities for women managers. HR can encourage mentoring through formal and informal mechanisms. Women can be encouraged to create and join powerful networks. Initiatives can be undertaken to celebrate successful women in leadership roles, so they can become role models for other women. Unfair treatment including salary differentials between men and women of comparable profiles need to be examined and corrected.

We have presented above some ideas for promoting the advancement of talented and deserving women to leadership roles. The list of initiatives can be expanded by enthusiastic and dedicated HR professionals. The most important task is enlisting the support of the top management. If unleashing the untapped leadership potential of talented women and harnessing it for organizational good becomes their shared agenda, a supportive top management and committed HR can do wonders together.
BEYOND THE GLASS CEILING

SAAGARIKA RAI

Abstract

This article gives a practical view at what is happening in corporates today. Though women leaders find it difficult to move up the corporate ladder, the good news is that the numbers are much higher than what it used to be a few years back. It is difficult for a woman to balance work and her personal life especially during the difficult years of childbearing and early years of parenting yet there are women who are ready to fight the battle and work extra hard to get to the top. Women as leaders are very different when compared to men but still the difference in the way they think, the way they act and their approach to work can be an advantage to them. So it is high time that organizations utilise the woman workforce that is so versatile, equally qualified and efficient like a man. Action has to be taken before the Glass ceiling turns to Metallic walls.

About the author

Saagarika is the Chief People Officer of Reliance BIG Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. She has an impressive track record with Jet Airways, RPG and Bharti Airtel spanning across 20 years of practice as a HR professional. Her core strength is to bring real impact on organization results by bringing together the best talent practices needed to attract, engage, build, leverage and retain top talent. She believes in catalyzing teams to rise above challenges and create breakthrough outcomes and is committed to women related issues. She is a professional speaker at national and international forums and academic institutions and member of the core advisory committee for World HRD Congress.

The Reality Check.....

Although some surveys point out that women continue to be under-represented in leadership roles in most sectors, but the solace is the gender gap in offices are narrowing. More women are at work than ever before and there is greater female influence at senior management level, as well as in the boardroom. The figures also show that more women are breaking through the so-called 'glass ceiling' and creating a 'boardroom greenhouse effect' as companies are warm to the idea of women in management roles. Certainly the glass ceiling is cracking and companies appreciate that they have to pay men and
women equally at the boardroom level. "But there is still a long way to go if women are to achieve true parity in the workplace," says Christine Hay Hurst, CMI's director of professional affairs. "Huge efforts have been made to work towards equality in the workplace". "Organizations are realizing you should not restrict roles because of gender", said Mike Petrook from the Chartered Management Institute.

But who on Earth likes to be treated different just because one is a woman. I prefer to be called Best Manager and not a Best Woman Manager. But the fact is it is not a 'gender-neutral' society. It took me through series of personal experiences that led to the remarkable discovery that there is life beyond glass ceiling and all of us make our own choices - one that has changed my way and purpose of life.

I have come across different women who struggled to make their presence felt and are successful in the corporate world. They are resourceful, determined, dynamic, resilient and compassionate. I have seen them battling it out with pregnancy, childbirth, child-raising, heartbreak and husband-raising …… being the career women and running the household. Trying to be the best at workplace, trying to be a super mom and world's best wife!!! On other hand, many highly educated women, who publicly may make politically correct statements decrying dearth of women in the boardroom, privately do admit that they’d really like to work part-time if at all and only on a pleasant job, so they can have ample time for home family, friends etc. Far fewer women are willing to work long hours. Harvard business school reports only 38% of its female MBA grads during their childbearing years work full time. Most of us make different choices and cannot have it both ways.

Missing Truth

Although I don’t think that there is a conspiracy designed to keep women away from the boardrooms or do I believe in tokenism, it is not a gender issue but simply a fact of life, for men also, to have women working with them; it must have called for some adjustment.

Just as the spotlight intensifies on leadership of women, new leadership models and corporate structure needs to be developed that are more in line with the competencies and leadership approaches of women executives whom the company needs to attract and retain, so in my mind I always asked this question, why would organizations want more women? After all we don’t think like men, we don’t talk sports, we focus on everything except the money, and we just don’t participate in the real conversations - those that happen in corridors. Besides we don’t have the experience that men have. RIGHT….. I agree we think differently. Just as other successful people in the business world do, we can set direction, analyze problems and provide leadership to organizations. In addition, we bring a highly developed emotional intelligence, considering the more subjective aspects of strategies and decisions, we do have different interests, and we bring different perspective to the discussion. We are attuned to body language and other non-verbal clues. Our instincts allow us to look at issues, opportunities and strategies differently rather than simply a cold analytical view, we consider a holistic view - one that can be extremely important during debates on acquisitions and major change initiatives. Our sensitivity to the 'people issues' helps to understand a broader set of risks and to develop plans to deal with those risks. We have complementary interests. We may not get excited about discussing the latest cricket score - but we are very interested and attuned to teamwork. After all - we do
make efforts to keep families together. We know how to build successful teams - both in business and at home, and we bring these skills to practice. We are able to deal with complex issues and juggle multiple priorities. We are able to facilitate agreements by listening carefully, asking tough questions and setting clear boundaries. We are open to new ideas - learning is a skill we have developed through the many changes in our own lives. We have had to balance work, family and personal lives and we respect the challenge that brings to others. We are a driving force in building high performance teams at all levels and we bridge the management/governance boundaries well. We set a personal example which encourages all to pay attention to their fiduciary responsibilities. We ensure that we consider ethical and social issues. We also consider the views of customers and employees in our deliberations. We do our homework - we are diligent about being prepared for meetings. We come armed with questions and we seek out information from a variety of sources. We govern with energy and enthusiasm. We invest in formal education keeping abreast of important developments. We are pleased when seasoned veterans give us advice and counsel. We will seek out for opinions on important issues. And while we may stumble occasionally we will learn from our mistakes - even laughing at ourselves as we learn the plays in the big league. We need to start sharpening our positives and prove value we bring to the table.

Childcare and flexible workings are not the main impediments to the progression of women but more inclusive organization cultures (to the benefit of all and not just women) and focused direction and rigor to gender diversity issue... Realization does sink in that we bring complementary skills to workplace. So shall we introspect on how prepared we to be part of the corporate rigmarole are. There are no select formulae to success but we must clearly know what we want to do...

**Critical Imperatives...**

**Dream Up** Some say there is no secret formula for professional success - its commitment, consistent performance and God’s grace. ‘Don’t be afraid to dream big and turn those dreams into reality. Work pressures are a part of the game’. Similarly one has to believe in what you want for yourself. You have to find your truth. To me it is extremely critical to get well rounded education no matter what you end up doing in life. My dad has been my coach who has helped me to get my dreams on the map. He has helped me to discover what my true desires are and helped me to find a way to live life on my own terms. "That is where we make our own choices and live with it."

**Raising the bar** Upgrading yourself helps to keep young - it's true! One way of postponing and preventing dementia is to participate in life-long learning. This has made me better professional and human being, and more importantly, has made the world better for me!

**The Personal ties** Family ties, friendships and involvement in social activities can offer a psychological buffer against stress, anxiety and depression. Social support can also help you cope better with health problems. It increases sense of belonging, purpose and self worth. Even though you feel guilty, should never forget to call and ask for help when you need it. You are not a superwoman and could not be in 100 places at one time and be 100 percent every time. I have always asked for help whenever I needed.

**Fitness of mind and body** Some of us who are careful about this will vouch for it. Mothers always give this advice but we
only learn it the hard way. Eating healthy and exercise helps to: manage stress, prevent osteoporosis, have more energy, be stronger, prevent heart disease, prevent cancer, and of course, feel, look and BE younger. Sleep helps us effectively deal with busy schedule and keep stress at bay. You need them to commiserate, to laugh, to talk we enjoy talking about. You need a platform to talk - a place where our audience is enraptured by similar topics.

**Money Matters** The more you invest, the greater your returns. Incorporate as many of these tips into life as soon as possible, and if this seems like a daunting task, enlist the help of an advisor to be successful AND happy!

**Beyond Business** Embrace our tradition of giving, adapting a new mindset of what success means and encourage people around you and organizations to advocate philanthropic culture.

The last few years have seen growth in the levels of education, confidence and most importantly, ambition in women, who are going all out to claim their rightful place in the corporate landscape. *We have set very high standards for us and have changed the way we used look at our selves,* and this has changed the way the world looks at us. Today we contribute to the success of challenging goals we set for ourselves. The days of the proverbial glass ceiling are over! for some...

To sum up, to build a classless workplace, we must corrode the existence of diversity where we are used to look at professionals as performers or non performers. Corporate World is in the best position to take a lead in doing away with categorizing people, classes and gender. As HR professionals let's build HR Systems and Processes where there is no room for discretion or distinguishing treatment to some. The real test although is in the Implementation of said Systems and Processes, which calls for change in culture and attitude.

Are we ready? Before the Glass ceilings turn into metallic walls, lets us try and transform at least the space we belong to.

**REMEMBER**

'All of you who make it BIG…

To turn around and give a helping hand to those behind you.'
LIONESS OR LAMB OF THE CORPORATE JUNGLE?

NANDINI RANGAN

Abstract

The big question in this article is “Do women in corporate roles still face prejudices based on their sex?” The article comes up with the problems that some of the leading ladies in India faced during the early years of their corporate career. But today the scenario is changing. Corporates have started welcoming women and also encourage them to move up the ladder because today’s work environment needs some of the traits that women are born with like sensitivity and adaptability and not the male aggression. However managing the home, children and work is still a challenge for most women which they manage through their skill of multitasking. This is the right time for ladies to make a mark for themselves and also for organizations to understand that ignoring the potential of women today is a fatal mistake.

About the author

She is an MBA from Great Lakes Institute of Management and the editor of the in-house journal - Successful Women In Management (SWIM), Great Lakes Institute of Management.

There is a famous song by Bob Dylan which goes like this - "the times they are a' changing". And how! These days there are no limits to what women can achieve. Having proved successfully that they can lead countries, manage corporate organizations, and succeed in all walks of life, they are now finally in charge of their destiny.

Do Women in Corporate Roles Still Face Prejudices Based on Their Sex?

It brings up the question - Do women in corporate roles still face prejudices based on their sex? Like so many other similar questions on gender equality or feminism, the only thing clear is that there are no clear answers for any of these issues.

What we do have, however, are opinions. And while these opinions swing wildly, depending on perspective, it is true that these questions are at least acknowledged in corporate circles, and women are finally being encouraged, if not actually favored in corporate roles.

When Kiran Mazumdar Shaw [1], Chairman and Managing Director of Biocon Ltd., began her career in the late seventies trying to raise money for her biotechnology project she experienced great difficulties. The problems she faced ranged from financial institutions not willing to lend her money to employees who were unwilling to work under a female boss. She is not the only one with this kind of an experience. Neeta Revankar [1], Head of the Finance, Legal and Secretarial departments at Sasken Communication Technologies Ltd., had around 10 elderly men working under her.
when she first started her career. According to these men, reporting to a lady was the "ultimate insult".

These women are not alone in their experiences. In fact most women who currently hold top managerial positions today have similar experiences and difficulties which they have had to overcome to get to where they are today.

The Changes in Corporates and Women Today

However, things today are very different. We now have women entering the industry with a set of career goals which are inherently the same as that of her male colleague. The enablers for this change lie in the corporate work style, or more importantly, in the management style. Where earlier, management styles were characterized by brute force and aggressiveness, essentially male attributes, these days, organizations are looking more for empathy, understanding and communication skills, attributes which are more feminine in nature. Gone are the days when women were identified with secretarial roles. Women are now increasingly sought as professional managers, who have the necessary skills and qualities that are required for an organization to succeed.

The main reasons for these changes arise from the way organizations are structured today. We have horizontally driven organizations driven by creativity and innovation, for the most part gender-neutral qualities, with multinational and multicultural work atmospheres requiring sensitivity and adaptability to change. Women fit the bill in these new organizations with great ease. These are the organizations that typically look for characteristics and competencies such as being adaptable, a good team player, and unconventional thinking which are also equally a part of the feminine psyche.

A classic example would be Anita Roddick [2] who built "Body Shop" into a successful international brand. She declares that it has everything to do with unconventionality, creativity and aesthetics, qualities not taught in business schools, but which come naturally to a woman.

With increasing number of women playing important roles in corporate organizations in both senior and middle management positions, a lot of credit for this will also have to go to their families. Chanda Kochhar [1], Deputy Managing Director of ICICI Bank Ltd, believes that the nuclear structure of families coupled with the values on which they are built, like cooperativeness and mutual support, has a lot to do with the increase in the number of women today who are foraying into the world of business.

It looks like the time is ripe for the women of today to take advantage of her situation and soar high. But not as high as she would like to for she still has some challenges to overcome. Women still have a multitude of responsibilities to take care of apart from work and maintaining a sensible work-life balance is proving a difficult goal. The literacy rate amongst women is still much lower than men, and it is much harder for a woman to enter the so called old buys network and build contacts. And of course there's the age-old "she's a woman" mentality to overcome.

Women Still Have a Long Way to Go

Amiruda Priya, an MBA student from a leading business school in India, feels that women still have a long way to go, in terms of being truly knowledgeable. Women today need to be equipped with the latest in technology and management. They also need to have "Money, Mobility and Muscle" said Dr. Kiran Bedi [3]. And how many women truly have these qualities? Also how many women are in leadership roles in organizations? Penetration rate in
IT is decent compared to that in R&D, manufacturing. Women are known as good HR personnel, but when are they going to prove that they are good marketers, good financial engineers and can handle complex operations?

While one can definitely work around and through most of these challenges, there is a lot that the corporate world can do in terms of supporting women and making it easier for them to handle their work-life balance. But more importantly, men should start looking at women as competent professionals who are out to give their best to the company they work for.

Is today the opportune time for women in corporate roles? Is there any such thing as a right time? Is there more change to come?

Irrespective of the answers to these questions, one thing is for sure - Any organization that ignores the potential of women today will have made a fatal mistake.

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3. Lecture by Dr. Kiran Bedi at the Successful Women In Management [SWIM] conference held at the Tidel Park, Chennai - August, 2007
Companies with more Women Board Directors experience higher financial performance, according to latest Catalyst Bottom Line Report shows that three or more may be the charm.

Fortune 500 companies with the highest representation of women board directors attained significantly higher financial performance, on average, than those with the lowest representation of women board directors, according to Catalyst’s most recent report, The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women’s Representation on Boards. In addition, the report points out, on average, notably stronger-than-average performance at companies with three or more women board directors.

The study, which is the second of Catalyst’s Bottom Line reports, looked at three critical financial measures: return on equity, return on sales, and return on invested capital, and compared the performance of companies with the highest representation of women on their boards to those with the lowest representation.

"Clearly, financial measures excel where women serve on corporate boards," said Ilene H. Lang, President of Catalyst. "This Catalyst study again demonstrates the very strong correlation between corporate financial performance and gender diversity. We know that diversity, well managed, produces better results. And smart companies appreciate that diversifying their boards with women can lead to more independence, innovation, and good governance and maximize their company’s performance."

The report found higher financial performance for companies with higher representation of women board directors in three important measures:

* Return on Equity: On average, companies with the highest percentages of women board directors outperformed those with the least by 53 percent.
* Return on Sales: On average, companies with the highest percentages of women board directors outperformed those with the least by 42 percent.
* Return on Invested Capital: On average, companies with the highest percentages of women board directors outperformed those with the least by 66 percent.

The correlation between gender diversity on boards and corporate performance can also be found across most industries—from consumer discretionary to information technology.

This study, sponsored by The Chubb Corporation, follows Catalyst’s 2004 Bottom Line report on the correlation between the percentage of women corporate officers and a company’s financial performance.

About This Study

The findings in this study were based upon the four-year average for ROE, ROS, and ROIC for 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004, and women board director (WBD) data for
2001 and 2003. Financial data for the companies examined were obtained from the Standard & Poor's Compustat database. Because of movement into and out of the Fortune 500 each year, there are 520 companies in this analysis; the top quartile comprises the 132 companies with the highest percentages of women board directors while the bottom quartile comprises the 129 companies with the lowest percentages of women board directors. WBD data was obtained from the 2003 Catalyst Census of Women Board Directors and the 2001 Catalyst Census of Women Board Directors. Financial performance measures vary by industry. To account for this variability, standardized financial performance measures were used to make comparisons within the overall sample.

**About Catalyst**

Founded in 1962, Catalyst is the leading nonprofit corporate membership research and advisory organization working globally with businesses and the professions to build inclusive environments and expand opportunities for women and business. With offices in New York, San Jose, Toronto, and Zug, and the support and confidence of more than 340 leading corporations, firms, business schools, and associations, Catalyst is connected to business and its changing needs and is the premier resource for information and data about women in the workplace. In addition, Catalyst honors exemplary business initiatives that promote women’s leadership with the annual Catalyst Award.
## APPENDIX 1: Fortune 500 Companies in the Top Quartile of Women Board Directors (WBD)

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1Companies in the top quartile are those with the highest average percentage of women board directors. Women board director (WBD) data was obtained from the 2003 Catalyst Census of Women Board Directors and the 2001 Catalyst Census of Women Board Directors.
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THE BOTTOM LINE: CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION ON BOARDS

Women Board Directors (WBD) Align With Strong Performance at Fortune 500 Companies

Financial measures excel where women serve

Return on Equity by Women's Representation on the Board
- Companies with more WBD outperform those with the least by 53%
  - Bottom Quartile WBD
  - Top Quartile WBD
  - Average: 9.1% vs. 13.9%

Return on Sales by Women's Representation on the Board
- Companies with more WBD outperform those with the least by 42%
  - Bottom Quartile WBD
  - Top Quartile WBD
  - Average: 9.7% vs. 13.7%

Return on Invested Capital by Women's Representation on the Board
- Companies with more WBD outperform those with the least by 66%
  - Bottom Quartile WBD
  - Top Quartile WBD
  - Average: 4.7% vs. 7.7%

Is Three a Charm?
Stronger-than-average results prevail at companies where at least three women serve

Financial Performance at Companies With Three or More Women Board Directors (WBD)
- Average ROE: 16.7%
- Average ROS: 16.8%
- Average ROIC: 10.0%

Link Between Women Board Directors (WBD) and Corporate Performance Holds Across Industries

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<th>Industry</th>
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<td>Materials</td>
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NOTES:
1. Data used were obtained from the Catalyst's Corporate Leadership Index database.
2. Correlation does not prove or imply causation.
3. Return on equity (ROE) ratio of after-tax net profit divided by shareholders' equity.
4. Return on sales (ROS) ratio of after-tax net profit divided by revenue.
5. Return on invested capital (ROIC) ratio of after-tax net profit divided by invested capital.
6. Standard & Poor's industry sectors were used.

This study was authored by Lois Joy, Ph.D., Director, Research, and Nancy M. Carter, Ph.D., Vice President, Research, at Catalyst Inc. and by Harvey M. Wagner, Ph.D., Professor, Kamen-Haper Business School, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and SriRam Narayanan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Eli Broad School of Business, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

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### APPENDIX 2: Fortune 500 Companies in the Bottom Quartile of Women Board Directors (WBD)

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<td>CITIGROUP, INC.</td>
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(Continued on page 2)

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1 Companies in the bottom quartile are those with the lowest average percentage of women board directors. Women board director (WBD) data was obtained from the 2003 Catalyst Census of Women Board Directors and the 2001 Catalyst Census of Women Board Directors.
## APPENDIX 2: Fortune 500 Companies in the Bottom Quartile of Women Board Directors (WBD)

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I am delighted and proud to share my experiences about a true symbol of leadership and unconditional giving: Mother Teresa—this 4 Feet 10.5 inches Mother of all humanity. If following is used as a simple litmus test to measure a successful leader, then there is no dearth of that with Mother Teresa. This is well evident from the fact that Mother Teresa’s ‘Missionaries of Charity’ which she founded had over 4,000 sisters, an associated brotherhood of 300 members, and over 100,000 lay volunteers, operating 610 missions in 123 countries at the time of her death. A truly charismatic leader, she has left us with a much better world to live in.

Women’s leadership and contribution are indispensable for the success and prosperity of communities across the globe today. In spite of many challenges faced by women world-wide, they continue to make incredible advances. The magnitude of a woman’s resilience and courage is remarkable. And there cannot be a better example of this perseverance, power and true demonstration of leadership than Mother Teresa.

I was fortunate to get a chance to work with Mother Teresa for about three years. With the help of Prof. Alok Sen of MDI, Gurgaon and 2 MBA students, we fixed the entire Accounting System, Responsibility and Accountability. I personally traveled to Kolkata twice for this work. The donations to and from the charity trust were predominantly in cash and no one really knew how balances and reconciliation of accounts were done. The Bank accounted only a part of the cash received since a lot of cash was kept in a security vault and no one had records of debits/credits and recurring balances etc. It was during this assignment that I had the god-given opportunity of learning from and more importantly - comprehending the phenomenon that is Mother Teresa.

To give a brief gist of Mother Teresa’s life, born in Albania in 1910, she traveled to India at the age of 19 to join the Sisters of Loreto, a missionary order of nuns. She served with them as a teacher for 20 years. At the age of 38, while traveling by train in India, she had a striking realization that her life’s mission was to minister and help the poorest of the poor. With the Pope’s blessing, Mother Teresa descended into the slums of Kolkata, and began the ‘Sisters of Charity’. Under her direction, the Sisters of Charity ministered to the sick and hungry of Kolkata. Her ability to truly reach out to every soul in distress is
commendable. I would like to liken her approach to the "Fish bowl" technique. She executed this flawlessly in learning about the poor - working in their environment, understanding them and empathizing with them. In my experience with her, I have always been amazed by her attention to detail and the fact that she knew every single thing about her organization - right up to the last detail! One can hardly expect today’s CEO’s to possess such thorough knowledge of one’s business, but there she was in life and spirit prompting me on ambiguous issues that I thought she would not even be aware of!

Showering love and food on all who came to the mission’s doorstep, Mother Teresa soon became a local celebrity. In a very short time, Mother Teresa gained international prominence as a modern day saint. Her fame can be in large part attributed to the 1969 documentary Something Beautiful for God, which was filmed by Malcolm Muggeridge and his 1971 book of the same title. She was very media savvy. Sensing the impetus that media could provide her cause, she took right advantage of her new-found recognition to bring the attention of the world to the plight of the poor everywhere. In 1979, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (having already received the Ramon Magsaysay in 1962) and the Bharat Ratna in 1980 and her position as the world’s greatest champion of the downtrodden was firmly established. She has in her own simple way proved that whatever the service offered, (with requisite demand), the right set of people with respectable vision, adhering to the best ideals of values and ethics, using suitable strategies for marketing and promotion and capital collection, can deliver extraordinary results anywhere in the world. By extension, she became a truly global leader.

Despite all the media attention she received, she was steadfast and clear in her mission. She chose to spend most of her time with the poor and destitute - traveling to war-torn areas and drought-stricken nations in her ongoing quest to help and support the needy. She has also been instrumental in saving civilians by negotiating cease fires between warring nations. She was firm in her belief that it is not how much we do or how big things are but how much love we put in doing them that is more important. For instance, during my stint at Kolkata when I assisted with her accounting system, she would make sure that she had at least one meal - usually the dinner with me. Irrespective of my late hours, she would wait up for me. Our discussions on my assignment would never be just that - it would be full of jokes and sharing of experiences both related and unrelated to the topic on hand. Even at the end of a hard and trying day, fatigue wouldn't set in! Another commendable trait was that she would 'listen' (not merely hear) to what I had to say. All these made the whole experience fun while at the same time productive and exemplary. On the one hand I see organizations (like Google etc.) today experimenting new and creative methods to make the workplace a fun place with a view to getting the best from their employees and on the other, I have witnessed Mother Teresa practicing this to perfection almost a decade back!

It is my view that if one really wants to give to society — to those who are not friends or, one should have something to offer; it need not be money, it could be service, education, time or effort or all these but the point of import is that such giving should be unconditional — without any return expected. Mother Teresa’s giving has always been full of generosity and humility to a point of being inspirational and divine.

In this context, I wish to talk about Mother Teresa’s tryst with institution-building. It began when she first started a school in
Motijhil in 1948 tending to the needs of the destitute and starving. It was not an easy job. Difficulties aplenty she sometimes even had to resort to begging for food and supplies. Mother Teresa received Vatican permission in 1950 to start the Diocesan congregation that would later become the Missionaries of Charity. In her own words it would serve "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone."

In 1952 Mother Teresa opened Nirmal Hriday. With the help of officials in Kolkata, she converted an abandoned Hindu temple into Kalighat, the Home of the Pure Heart (Nirmal Hriday). Those brought to the home received medical attention and were afforded the opportunity to die with dignity, according to the rituals of their faith. Muslims were read the Quran, Hindus received water from the Ganges, and Catholics received the Last Rites. “A beautiful death,” she said, “is for people who lived like animals to die like angels — loved and wanted.”

Soon afterwards, Mother Teresa opened a home for those suffering from leprosy called Shanti Nagar (City of Peace). The Missionaries of Charity also established several leprosy outreach clinics throughout Kolkata, providing medication, bandages and food. As the Missionaries of Charity took on increasing numbers of lost and orphaned children, Mother Teresa felt the need to create a home for them. In 1955 she opened the Nirmala Shishu Bhavan, the Children’s Home of the Immaculate Heart, as a haven for orphans and homeless youth.

The order soon began to attract both recruits and charitable donations, and by the 1960s had opened hospices, orphanages, and leper houses all over India. Mother Teresa then expanded the order throughout the globe. The first house outside India opened in Venezuela in 1965 with five sisters. Others followed in Rome, Tanzania, and Austria in 1968; during the 1970s the order opened houses and foundations in dozens of countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the United States.

At this juncture, I would like to introduce the idea that it was not only her Organization that she furthered. She always tried to make leaders out of people who needed the right stimulus. If ‘Great Lakes’ has been conceived, it is partly due to her. She was the person who told me that MDI was not enough and that India needed business leaders. This led me to conceive the idea of a National Business School preferably in Mumbai in association with International schools like Kellogg and Wharton. That is what created ISB and shortly afterward, Great Lakes, both of which rank among the top B-schools in the country. I am confident to say these two schools owe a deep debt of gratitude to the ‘Frail’ Lady with a ‘Strong’ Vision of passion and compassion leading to development of Great Institutions.

This one-school, one-woman organization, today has a global presence, millions of stake holders, thousands of well-wishers, multiple suppliers and contributors, perpetuity and in many ways has revolutionized delivery of service to the needy across the globe. Mother Teresa by doing what she did, so well, unwittingly set a whole new standard in the creation and management of a Global organization!

I have tried to remember Mother Teresa to the best of my ability, bringing together my best experiences with her and also highlighting those traits and endearing qualities about her that made her the world’s favorite humanitarian. I have also tried to trace the growth of her ‘Missionaries of Charity’ from inception to
their position at the time of her death with a view to emphasizing that whatever be the ‘business’ of an organization, with the right leader and focused efforts - you can only win!

In conclusion, Krishna, in the Bhagvad Gita observes, 'You have a right to perform your prescribed action, but you are not entitled to the fruit of your labour. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never shirk from doing your duty.' (Translated from Sanskrit: “Karmanye Vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana, Ma Karma Phala Hetur Bhurmatey Sangostva Akarmani”) Easier said than done! This is a quality that only the noblest can hope to possess. Yet, such was the magnanimity and large-heartedness of Mother Teresa that she lived up to this ideal with amazing ease and grace. She was a Karma Yogi and I hope to be able to follow the Big Steps made by her Small Feet! If I am able to achieve even a fraction of what she accomplished during her lifetime, I would consider myself blessed. Jai Hind! Jai Mother Teresa!

Inputs for the article have also been provided by Shriram Bharathan and Balaji S T of Great Lakes Institute of Management; Factual Information courtesy Wikipedia.
STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART: AN INTERVIEW WITH Sister NIRMALA

SABRINA A, ARUMA G M and PRABHAKAR L
(Corporate HR Team of ITC)

Introduction to Sister Nirmala

"If you have a sick or lonely person at home, be there. May be just to hold a hand, maybe just to give a smile, that is the greatest, the most beautiful work." Sister Nirmala, is Mother Teresa's successor as Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity. The Sister of the Missionaries of Charity does not relish being named but are essential to be named as there we salute the leader in her. She is a modest woman, and when she succeeded Mother she quietly said, "Mother Teresa can never be replaced".

Kolkata is known to many as the "City of Joy" largely because its underlying social fabric has, over the years, been influenced by leaders and organizations who have believed that every individual, whatever may be his or her walk of life, is ultimately in search of a sense of purpose and meaning. Arguably, the two organizations that have had a significant impact on the social fabric of Kolkata are the Ramakrishna Mission and the Missionaries of Charity.

In response to a request from the Editorial Board of the NHRDN Journal, we attempted to interview Sr Nirmala who took over the reigns from Mother Teresa as Leader of the Missionaries of Charity in 1997. Mother Teresa was known and loved for her compassion and love for the poor and it is this love and care for the poor that enabled her set the foundation for the Missionaries of Charity, a community of men and women who have dedicated their lives to looking after the sick, poor and underprivileged, not only in Kolkata but across India, and in several other parts of the world. Mother Teresa demonstrated a genre of leadership very different from leadership that has succeeded in the corporate world.

The purpose of interviewing Sr Nirmala was to attempt to understand how and what the corporate world could learn from the Missionaries of Charity in terms of aligning the organization to a common vision and purpose, which indeed is the hallmark of effective leadership.

Q. : What was Mother Teresa's vision for herself and for the Missionaries of Charity?

A. : Mother's vision for herself as well as for the Missionaries of Charity, was that we all become saints and help others to become so by our faithfulness to the call God has given to each one of us as Missionaries of Charity, all for the glory of God and the good of all, including our own. To become saints means to surrender ourselves to God so totally that He can live
in us and love through us and do His work through us.

**Learnings:** Alignment to a super-ordinate goal is the foundation for success. Every organization and every individual needs to define this super-ordinate goal. Successful organizations facilitate the process of alignment through intensive and sustained interventions focused on defining, communicating, living and reinforcing this super-ordinate goal. The better the alignment, better is the engagement of employees with the organization.

**Q.:** In your view, was her Vision actualised in its entirety during her lifetime? What part of her Vision has been realised after her passing away?

**A.:** Mother's vision was realised wonderfully in her own personal life. She strengthened our commitment to be holy by challenging us to holiness by the example of her own life as well as by providing for us the way to holiness by responding to God’s call to her to establish the Missionaries of Charity. This is the way of holiness we are trying to walk on and despite falling along the way; we rise again to resume the journey. Whilst doing so, we keep on praying the prayer Mother taught us "Lord make me a saint, and spare me not in the making ".

**Learnings:** The challenge for leadership is not just in articulating a vision. Leaders should build resolve to actualise the vision by leading from the front, translating the vision into challenging interventions and ensuring support and guidance to remain focused. Effective leaders ensure that temporary setbacks to not discourage the team, and help build resilience to face any adversity. Organization and individual development is a long painstaking process, and only if there is a willingness to persevere through the same, can the vision be actualised.

**Q.:** In leading a large institution, we sometimes lose sight of the larger goal by spending disproportionate time on the “smaller” things, leaving little time for growing and moving the institution forward. How did Mother manage to strike the balance in leading the Institution?

**A.:** Mother always had her goal in sight — to satiate the sight of an infinite God and love of every human person, especially the poorest of the poor. What was important for her was not the vast mass of humanity, but the individual person in front of her and his/her immediate need — a glass of water, a blanket, food, a listening ear, a smile, a hand to hold, a word of assurance. Mother used to tell us "To the good God, nothing is little, because He is so great and we are so small. That is why He stoops down and takes the trouble to make those little things for us to give us a chance to prove our love for Him because he makes them, they are very great. He cannot make anything small, they are infinite".

**Learnings:** Whilst organizations have a macro-strategy, the execution of this strategy should cognise for every micro-element. A well articulated employee engagement strategy will not yield the desired results, unless the organization processes ensure that every employee has the opportunity to be heard, nurtured and focused on. Similarly, the power of one dis-satisfied customer / consumer is well known. Many effective leaders have been known to have this amazing ability to connect with individuals across levels over a period of time. The power of the individual in the larger context, be it an employee or a consumer, is well known.

**Q.:** How did Mother celebrate success? How did she define success?

**A.:** Mother celebrated success by attributing it all to God and praising and thanking Him for His goodness. She used to say, "God uses our nothingness to show His greatness. Let us all see the good works and glorify the Lord".
Learnings: This is the best demonstration of Level 5 leadership, where enduring greatness is built through a paradoxical combination of personal humility plus professional will.

"Level 5" leaders look out of the window to apportion credit to factors outside themselves when things go well (and if they cannot find a specific person or event to give credit to, they credit good luck). At the same time, they look in the mirror to apportion responsibility, never blaming bad luck when things go wrong. This is truly the hallmark of effective leadership.

Q. : Mother was known to be very adaptable. Leading the Missionaries of Charity would have required skills very different from those required when interacting with government institutions, civil society and corporate bodies. What traits did she maintain across these roles and how did she adapt to different situations?

A. : Mother freely met all people of all nations, cultures, religions, ideologies, social status, walks of life, men, women and children of all ages. For her they were all God’s children, her brothers and sisters. She loved them all, asking all to love one another as God loves them and showed them the simple way of living. She prayed for them and challenged all to be holy, saying, "Holiness is not a luxury of the few, but a simple duty of everyone". She pointed out the way of holiness, as doing God’s will with a smile according to each one's specific call in life.

Learnings: Ability to traverse and manage diversity within and outside the organization is a necessary competence for effective leaders, more so in the current context of boundaryless organizations and increased engagement with society and the environment. Stakeholder engagement by creating a win-win proposition wherein each stakeholder can see a mutuality of interest is emerging as a distinctive feature of 'living organizations'.

Q. : What in your view were Mother’s leadership attributes?

A. :
- She was a woman of prayer, contemplation and love, seeking always the will of God and not her own. She worked for God’s glory and the good of all, sacrificing her own interests.
- She trusted in God with an unshakeable trust and inculcated the same trust in us and challenged us to do great things for God, as she knew nothing is impossible with God.
- She believed in the goodness of people and made them believe that they are good and are capable of doing something worthwhile and brought the best out of them.
- She never discouraged anyone but gave hope to everyone, willing to give always one more chance to those who failed.
- She inspired confidence in her by being herself an example of what she taught us.

Learnings: An effective leader is a role model who sets the highest standards for himself or herself. They demonstrate a high degree of personal credibility, manifested in their commitment to their organization, ability to influence and advocate, ability to mobilise the heart, mind and spirit of individuals by giving them the courage and confidence, belief in positivity, mentality of abundance and above all, instilling self belief in their people. A fierce resolve towards life, never stopping to try, incredible ambition for the organization, unwavering resolve to do whatever must be done, setting standards, and a calm and quiet disposition; all traits of a Level 5 leader that can be seen in Mother Teresa’s leadership style.
Q. : In your view, how would Mother describe the new century?

A. : Mother would possibly call the new century "God's gift of love to us to love and to be loved as God loves each one of us". Mother always focused on the good that was there and was also convinced that God can bring good even out of evil for those who trust Him.

Learnings : The new century may seem to be fraught with challenges - challenges of environment, terrorism, intolerance, etc. But, there are also several examples where leaders are trying to overcome these challenges, by getting individuals to refocus on the beauty and uniqueness of humankind, the need to preserve the gift of nature, and more importantly how do we live in harmony with ourselves, with other individuals and living beings and with nature and the environment.

Q. What are some of the deepest and most lasting lessons you have learnt from Mother?

A. : Every person is unique. I have tried to learn from Mother loving trust in God and total surrender to His will with joy, to love no matter what it costs, to be willing to give one more chance to those who fail, love for prayer, for littleness, hiddenness and simplicity.

Learnings : Every individual is unique. An effective leader realises this, attempts to identify the uniqueness and the strengths, and endeavours to leverage them. No individual is perfect, and every individual does have limitations. There is no gain in highlighting these limitations, since they neither benefit the individual nor the organization. Similarly, tolerance to failure, and more importantly standing by in such moments, can significantly inspire and motivate the individual to give his or her best. Also, it will encourage them to stretch in their assignments without the fear of being rebuked or penalized in the event of falling short of the stretched target. Empathy demonstrated by even the smallest of gestures at such moments can leave a deep impression. How often has it been seen that the momentary and spontaneous gesture of an arm around the shoulder when an individual had failed, has had the power of a thousand words.

Q. : In the CNN interview with you in 1998, you referred to problems as "challenges" and that there are never obstacles to work, rather "God allows these challenges because they are good for us". How would you define failure?

A. : Failures are opportunities for growth in humility and trust in God that lead to success.

Learnings : Can a rose plant be envisaged without thorns? In today’s complex world, no task is simple. There are challenges in every nook and corner, some known, some unknown, some predictable and some not. The effective leader sees an opportunity in every such challenge - an opportunity to think differently, an opportunity to make a difference. Such leaders do not shy away from risks, and believe in learning from failures. Humility to accept mistakes and learn from them can go a long way in building an enduring organization.

Q. : What do you feel are the three core principles of the Missionaries of Charity that will sustain it into the future?

A. : I believe the three core principles that will sustain the Missionaries of Charity into the future are:

- Proper understanding of our call as Missionaries of Charity
- Conviction and love for our call
- Freely choosing to live it radically no matter what it may cost us, depending totally on the grace of God.

Learnings : Sustainable organizations should have a compelling vision with a sense of purpose and meaning, wherein every
stakeholder is ‘engaged’ with the organization because of the shared purpose and meaning. Sustainable organizations should also have the courage and resilience to remain focused on the path selected, strengthen their unique cultural dimensions, and have a long-term orientation without getting tempted by short-term gains.

Q. : What legacy would you like to leave behind?

A. : I would like to leave behind the continuation of the legacy of our Mother in all its purity.

Learnings: Effective leaders are like trustees. They ensure that the faith reposed in them by stakeholders is sustained, the efforts and contribution of successive generations are leveraged and more importantly, leave behind a strong and enduring organization that would continue to serve many future generations.

The Editorial Team profoundly thanks Anand Nayak, Head - HR, ITC, for his support and guidance.
Vinita, graduated in Arts with long experience of managing Cement business. Vested with substantial powers of management under the superintendence, control and direction of the Board of Directors, Smt. Singhania, Managing Director, looks after planning, coordination and control of production and sales, developmental activities of the Company, interaction with associations of the cement industry and HRD function of the Company. She has been instrumental in shaping the HR culture of the Company leading to awards of the prestigious DMA & Watson Wyatt Worldwide award for Excellence in innovative HR practices. She has spearheaded the launching of Company’s blended cement, which results in a higher contribution than a conventional portland cement.

As the Director of the hugely successful JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd., Vinita has established herself as an exceptional businesswoman. Her humanity is attested by her enthusiastic participation in various philanthropic activities including her support of Learning Matters. In her career has exhibited an exemplary transparent decision making process, a down to earth approach in tackling problems and has implemented numerous innovative HR policies which has helped the company grow and earn various laurels.

While other women leaders everywhere had to probably prove themselves at each stage of the career ladder, Vinita’s challenge seems to be to excel in each role she played.

Vinita, with rich experience in successfully running large organizations and attained business heights, has the following views:

The introduction to Vinita Singhania:

Vinita Singhania, Managing Director of JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd. since 2001. She is also Director on Boards of Niyojit Properties Pvt.Ltd. and Vinita Stockholdings Pvt.Ltd. Vinita Singhania built her fame within an industry where men were accepted without explanation. She was awarded the Bharat Shiromani Award for the year 2006 for her commendable work in the sector of business and industry and Corporate Leadership. Bharat Shiromani, which was instituted in the year 1977, honors men and women of Indian origin for their outstanding achievement in their chosen fields. Vinita Singhania is the only woman to receive the award in this particular segment.

About the author

Prinitha Murthy, an MBA from University of Wales, heads BPO division of Exclusive Search Recruitment Consultants, Chennai.
Interview with Vinita Singhania

Q. : Despite large number of women entering organizations, there seems to be a dearth of women leaders in most of the sectors. What could be the reasons and any suggestions?

A. : It is really a welcome change to see women today pushing themselves that extra bit to do justice to their work. However what is remarkable is that, many of us are doing it without compromising on our other duties like family and home. In any society it takes some time for a change to emerge. A few decades back when women began taking centre stage at the work arena there was a looming doubt on how they would manage it all. I believe God has created them to multitask and thus do justice to both the roles with equal ease.

It is an encouraging sign. However, I would say that the reason why we have still not outnumbered men or let’s just say that we have not made our presence felt by way of numbers is that there are a few social implications on women. She takes a little longer time than a man to tread the same career path because she is responsible for her family as well. We need just a little more education and enlightenment in our Indian society to accept women leaders in all fields with open arms. It will certainly take place as current trends are positive.

Q. : What advice would you like to give to women trying to build their careers and grow as leaders?

A. : A woman should primarily be confident of her own self, rising above certain situations and believing in her own capabilities to achieve her individual goals. A woman should also be bold and demand her just rights. It is easy to not take risks and play your feminine card ... but remember great battles are ... not ... won like that. Challenges have to be accepted and conquered rather than being choosy or avoided.

A woman should ensure that tenderness is not taken as a weakness, but be firm on self-defined goals and principles. Also, build your own team totally committed to you in order to support your efforts.

Q. : Do you think women have different professional and personal challenges from men in leading and institution building?

A. : From the broader perspective I would say no. All work related problems and challenges should be met without bringing the gender card in question. But if you delve a little deeper you will realize that emotionally there are differences between men and women. Emotional differences largely help in decision making. As a woman, I have myself encountered many situations at the workplace which require a sensitive handling and I am glad I have been able to deal with them because of being a woman.

The saying that behind every successful man, there is woman is also a support to what I have said before.

Q. : What leadership style do you think works well in the Indian context?

A. : It is an era of democracy. The democratic style with wholesome participation from all associates alone can create a successful team. Thus the job of the Team Leader becomes easier when there is freedom to function or express what is right for the good of the business. Too much indulgence and too elaborate in review of the team’s performance will rob of the charm of initiatives by the team-members. Trust and confidence can alone win the hearts of many who dedicate their lives for the mission’s success. ‘A pat on the back’ at the right moment can do wonders. Sharing the joy and sorrow of colleagues is another secret for a leader to head a team.
As long as you value the feelings and provide unflinching support that takes care of the personal side of the team members, the output from such team members has to fetch success undoubtedly. To be personal and humane acts like a strong dose of vitamin for building a successful team. Most of the biggest organizations in the world have at some point of time worked united as a family to bring splendid results.

To conclude, although as an entrepreneur and a leader, your word is considered … you do so, by balancing emotions of all people.

Q. : How do you balance your personal and work lives?

A. : Initially it took sometime for me to adjust to work life. Working full time was a sudden development, but later on, I learnt to not mix both personal and work life. I have now learnt that both are wonderful aspects of my life and require my attention. It is about the commitment and love towards your home and work. It is really not difficult to strike a balance. I am clear in my mind and constantly prioritize "Things to do" list.

I know that emotions and attachment play a major role in personal life and determination and objectivity determine my success at work. Conscientious of both priorities, perhaps I am able to separate the two.

Q. : While you were growing in the career ladder, did you have any mentors or women role models?

A. : Having born in a business family and thereafter, married to a large industrial family, the basic instincts for business and enterprise always remained alive and active within me. When I had to take over the reins; the challenges, then, did not appear threatening as I had the support of family members and totally committed team members. Since I had entered into Cement Manufacturing business - mostly dominated by men I had no mentor in the business to look up to.

However I draw inspiration from successful women leaders of our country when challenges confront me.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

RAJANI SESHADRI

Abstract

Despite a 50-year history of women in the corporate world, there are still only a very few women that occupy those coveted top roles. Is it because industry is still un-accepting of women leaders, or that women do not have the capability for the top jobs or is it something else? This article explores the obstacles that women managers face and attempts to set out recommendations for the individual, the organization and industry bodies, to help widen and deepen the pool of talent available to companies and boards.

About the author

Ms Rajani Seshadri heads the Telecom Solutions Center (TSC) at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), with over 22 years experience in IT. She led the team that was involved in successful transition of to SEI-CMM Level 5.

An Electrical Engineer from the National Institute of Technology, Nagpur, she has completed her post-graduation at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

Rajani was adjudged ‘Outstanding Woman Manager of 2004’ by Madras Management Association (MMA). Recently, she has also been featured in DataQuest’s “Top Women in IT”.

The 19th century saw the birth of a new consciousness in India, that looked at women's rights. These first campaigns were primarily against purdah, Sati, women's health and literacy. This women’s movement was led not just by women leaders, such as Annie Besant, Margaret Cousin, Kamla Devi Chattopadhay, Sarojini Naidu, Pandita Ramabai, but also male leaders including Rammohan Roy and Jyotiba Phule. By the late-19th century, this had resulted in women’s colleges being set up and women entering the workforce in the organized sector, albeit in miniscule numbers. However, our interest today lies in the ‘Women in the Corporate Workforce’, which became a meaningful term, approximately 50 years ago. But after half-a-century, even this accounts for barely 11% of the population of women in India (India’s socio-economic indicators: a statistical profile - Compiled by Arpita Bedekar).

But, some of these women have risen to the heights of their specialties, whether it be public service, medicine or management. But, then again, the numbers are so small as to make us wonder why so few of the 494 million Indian women have risen to the top. It is definitely not for a lack of ambition or aspiration - girls consistently outperform boys in academics, the male-female ratio in college-level science and engineering programs is close to 50% and every seminar or event targeted towards professional women is filled to capacity.
A number of studies conducted both in India and in the USA indicate a common set of reasons. A recent article in the Harvard Business Review (Sep 2007) by Alice H. Eagly, Linda L. Carli, of Northwestern University and Wellesley College recommends that the reasons are so closely inter-related that the hitherto used metaphor of a glass-ceiling be replaced by that of a labyrinth. Successfully negotiating a labyrinth requires perseverance, an awareness of progress made and opportunities lost, and a careful analysis of the twists and turns that are yet to appear.

Some of the obstructions that women face include

- Lack of significant line experience
- Stereotyping of women’s abilities, aspirations and leadership styles
- Lack of mentoring and/or role models

In addition, consider the progress through the ranks. Most large companies today, have a 50:50 male-female ratio at intake. Let us say that there are ten levels between the entry level Management Trainee and the top jobs. At each of these levels, we find approximately 20% fewer women than at the previous level - so the number of women at the tenth level will be $0.8^{10}$, that is 10%. This leaves far too few women in the pipeline and naturally, fewer still that make it to the board-room. So, if the goal is to increase the number of women in the top jobs, it is essential that we look at the entire pipeline. What is making these young women drop out of the race - whether it be by moving out of the workforce altogether or by moving to staff roles that don’t lead to the board-room?

This article attempts to examine each of these obstacles and some recommendations for negotiating them.

Lack of Significant Line Experience

Talk to any CEO, and you will hear the same thing - line management experience is essential to get to the top jobs. And what is line management? Line managers are directly responsible for generating revenues and profits for the company (sales, business unit head).

Think about it, and it is just common sense. What are the jobs in the C-suite? Chief Executive officer, Chief Financial Officer, .... Would any board, pick someone for a corporate role, if they have never demonstrated the capability to deliver revenue and profits?

Given the talent crunch that most industries face today (or even for the past several years - given that employability is not guaranteed), gender discrimination is unusual at the entry level. However, as women gain job experience, many seem to gravitate to staff roles, maybe because of personal and family commitments or because they are uncomfortable with the leadership styles favoured by the organization. And, to get to the c-suite, one must pay the dues at the middle management levels to learn the nitty-gritty, day-to-day challenges of bringing in business, managing costs, hiring and retaining the right people and building the skills and the capacity required for the organization five and ten years down the line.

So, women who aspire to reach the boardroom must acquire line experience. And in order to do so, they must overcome their discomfort with prevailing leadership mores, find ways of managing family responsibilities, and develop their own management style. Challenges appear not only when one reaches the rung just below the c-suite, but are present at every career milestone. Each choice then influences the journey to the top.
Recommendation

The first six to eight years of professional life are critical, whether for men or women. It is at this stage that one learns the tools of the trade, volunteers for the tough assignments that demonstrate the capability and commitment that catches the eye of the bosses, in turn leading to high-visibility assignments that make one the natural choice for the front-line roles. If this is not understood and used with savvy, the opportunity is lost forever.

As women delay marriage and childbearing to their late twenties and thirties, it becomes possible for them to use those early years as effectively as their male peers have done and do so today. But it is essential to understand the pattern and prepare for it effectively, by becoming an expert in a functional area such as strategic planning, manufacturing, marketing or sales, getting involved in a Corporate Sustainability initiative, etc, so that, the minute an opportunity arises, one is ready and able to take a position with profit and loss responsibility.

Stereotyping of Women's Leadership Styles

From the earliest years of childhood, both girls and boys receive numerous cues, both overt and subliminal, about gender appropriate attitudes and behaviours. By adulthood, these are ingrained and strongly influence behaviour at the workplace, especially for men, who have had no reason to revise their attitudes. However as girls grow up, and their aspirations and ambitions change, in response to education and exposure to role models, their attitudes may change dramatically. This creates a wide gap between men's perceptions of what women are capable of, what their aspirations ought to be and what leadership behaviour they should demonstrate.

Can you imagine the dilemma a career-minded young woman inspired by the 'ICICI Ladies' or an Indra Nooyi would face, when a male co-worker tells her that her behaviour is too 'aggressive' or that she is a 'control freak', when a male colleague exhibiting the same behaviour is praised for being 'passionate'. Or, for that matter, is told that her leadership style is not assertive or forceful, and that she is "too nice" to people? The classic double-bind - she cannot use the communal (feminine) style of leadership, which is innate, nor can she use the agentic (masculine) style which is the accepted norm for leaders.

What should be the reaction of a woman manager, when told, by a well-meaning (or otherwise) supervisor, that a job is too demanding for her, but not for a male colleague? Or, is not invited to a team 'evening out', because she is female and therefore would (presumably) not be interested? These and many other such behaviours send out a clear message that she is not valued, purely on the basis of her gender.

The impact of such messages is seen clearly - women don't drop out or get excluded at the pre-finals to the c-suite; they drop off in large numbers all along the way.

Recommendation

Organizations have a big role to play in this area, by building effective processes and systems. HR professionals and leaders in the company can be change agents by

- understanding if and how the informal aspects of the company’s culture and environment discourage women from seeking and achieving leadership positions.
- building a partnership of HR and line managers to sensitize managers, both men and women, through training and communication programs that deal with subjects of diversity and gender.
– ensuring the systems and processes of the company are robust and can detect inappropriate behaviours

– helping to build a women’s network to encourage mentoring.

– celebrating women achievers at all levels - while it is easy to point to a Carly Fiorina or a Naina Lal Kidwai as role models (why women? these leaders are role models for men and women), it is very hard for a 20-something manager to see the path that will take her to those dizzy heights. A better role model would be a successful woman on a high trajectory, no more than 5 - 8 years ahead, in their own context, whose career path is relevant to them and that they can relate to.

This is also where management associations, such as All India Management Association (AIMA), NHRD, CII, etc, can play a role in building and highlighting a community of women managers that facilitates mentoring and networking. The Madras Management Association (MMA), holds an annual competition for Outstanding Women Manager of the Year, the winner of which is honored at their International Women's Day (IWD) event. This year, the IWD drew over 500 women managers, age ranging from 25 years to 60+ years. They were an articulate crowd, open to ideas, willing to ask questions, challenge the speakers and stayed involved through a long day. Here is where they can find their role models, and as we will see in the next section, maybe their mentors.

Lack of Mentoring

Mentors help employees maximize their potential by giving them valuable career advice, offering an impartial perspective on issues / events / the work environment, and exposing mentees to influential employee networks. And possibly the greatest benefit - the confidence to push ahead with plans. But every mentee/protégée must understand that mentors cannot sort out their problems nor can they be prescriptive about what to do.

Whether men or women, we have all felt the need for a sounding board from time to time. especially, when we have career choices to make. A mature mentoring relationship can make a big difference at this point. But in order to get the most out of a relationship, as any other, it is essential to build and nourish it well before it is needed. Also, a mentee could have multiple mentors - depending on the type of issues and challenges that they face. However, each of these relationships will take time to build, but if an employee is willing to make that investment, the payoff can be tremendous.

Mentoring can also mitigate the impact of being excluded from the informal networks of communication that women find a barrier to advancement. In addition, it can help women an appropriate networking forum, whether it be through industry forums or Corporate Sustainability initiatives.

Recommendation

Organizations have a big role to play in this area, by building an effective mentoring program. This can be a complex, multi-directional program with internal and external programs (through a wider community of women managers), formal, informal or facilitated programs. It may be one-to-one matching of mentors and mentees or an informal facilitation where a mentee identifies one or mentors and builds a relationship. In either case, it is imperative that the organization support it through policies, systems and processes. The program must be rewarding for both mentors and mentees, giving the former, recognition and visibility as leaders and
diversity champions and for the latter with career growth.

What More Can Organizations Do?

While family support, education and investing in building mentors are critical to any woman's success, the organization can make or break it. I have already spoken about investments in training, helping to build mentoring and peer networks and strengthening systems and processes. All of these are essential. However, there are two other things that organizations can and must do to ensure that the talent pool that they fish in is wider and deeper than it is today, so that the organization of tomorrow has the best of agentic and communal styles of leadership to tap into.

- **Organizations must articulate loudly and clearly, that they value diversity**
  This must be driven by ‘leaders who lead’, with metrics clearly tied to organizational strategy and bonuses tied to the achievement of goals. No diversity program can succeed, if the leaders believe that those that negotiate the labyrinth without support alone are the fittest and worthy of being considered for the top jobs. This is unfair in two ways. One, they are competing with men who have the key to the maze and two, they are competing with those that do not bear the primary responsibility for child-bearing, child-rearing and being the primary care-givers for aging parents. Indeed, the best of us can do with a helping hand at times.

- **Provide visible support to women**
  The cost of hiring, training and integrating an employee is enormous. If they leave the organization at the end of five years or so, just as they are ready to move into managerial roles, the cost is even higher. We are essentially wasting resources - may as well have not recruited them! While compensation may be a reason to leave, most women tend to leave because they are either uncomfortable with the leadership culture and style or do not see a clear route to advancement. The first, I have already spoken about. The second can be addressed only through communication. And yes, this may mean treating them as a distinctly different group.

Do tell your women employees the importance of building relationships, networking within and outside the organization and the need to develop a personal leadership style.

Do tell them about the need for line experience.

And finally do recognize their successes and publicize them, so there are more and more role models available to young, ambitious women joining the workforce, willing and eager to fight their way to the heart of the labyrinth.
WHY ONLY A FEW WOMEN ARE REACHING CORPORATE BOARDROOMS?

SUNITA CHUGH

Abstract

Drawing from social science research in the area of management and leadership for women; this paper attempts to bring together the various emergent themes in the arena of gender diversity in boardrooms of the global powerful corporates.

With the aim to establish a link between the supply of women from - Top Management Teams (TMTs) - into corporate boardrooms, this paper posits and attempts to establish that the dearth of women in TMTs is the main cause for scarcity of women in corporate boardrooms.

A conceptual paper, this paper finds its roots in five key diverse geographic boundaries where research on women in boardrooms is predominant-UK, The USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Studies in the Indian context can use these varied research themes as a point of departure for understanding and explaining the scarcity of women in Indian Boardrooms.

About the author

Sunita Chugh, a commerce graduate with an MMS, NMIMS, Mumbai University, worked in HR with Crompton Greaves Ltd, and Grid Consultants. Currently, pursuing the full time FPM programme at MDI, Gurgaon. As an author, enjoys writing in the areas of Leadership, Gender, Talent Management, Careers, Leadership development in BPOs etc. with a few publications in reputed Professional Journals.

Absence of women from highest and most visible positions in business cannot be ignored (Wentling, 2003, Burke and Nelson, 2002, Solomon, 1998, Ely, 1995). Women in management is an important topic of concern, given that an increasing number of women are in the workforce, but only a very small percentage hold top level managerial positions in business and public administration (Wentling 2003, Crampton and Mishra, 1999, Wah, 1998, Alvesson and Billing, 1997). Alarming findings (Owen et. al. 2003, Daily et al 2000, Daily et al. 1999), reveal and thereby forecast, that
women had made no progress in ascending to executive positions and are unlikely to do so for many years.

Although, appointment of women on corporate boardrooms is both a business issue as well as a demographic and social imperative, it may be argued that increasing the representation in the corporate boardroom is of little relevance. Why is it important that women have a higher representation in boardrooms when they can make greater contributions to society in other ways and reach self-actualisation by doing so (O’Connor 2001, Tharenou, 1996, 1997)? But, the question is not how or whether we can make it happen? It is, why do only few women make it to the boardrooms?

Findings are discussed in two sections:

a) Scarcity of women in boardrooms;

b) Paucity of women in Top Management Teams (TMT) which leads to scarcity of women in boardrooms.

(a) Scarcity of Women in Boardrooms

Even in the 21st century not all powerful businesses globally have women in their boards. Some have no women on their boards yet. Different reasons are cited for scarcity of women in boardrooms in various countries. A brief tapestry of the emergent themes and their findings are presented countrywise.

UK: By 2010 just a third of the workforce of the UK will be male and under 45. Currently, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) estimates 10.5 percent of Directors (executive and non-executive) in the FTSE 100 companies as women. The issue of women’s representation in decision-making roles is an important topic in UK and the main concern is the persistent lack of women on top corporate boards. The paucity of women board members can be attributed to the British Industry’s stringent definition of appropriate experience as also the ‘old boys’ network1 which creates difficulties in getting on the short-list of the Board of Directors. With corporate experience being a prerequisite for selection on to boards women candidates find themselves in the proverbial Gordian Knot2.

The USA: Less than 5 percent of the top positions are held by women (Fortune Magazine poll of 1000 companies, 1992). In 2000, women accounted for 11.7 per cent of the Board of Director membership in Fortune 500 companies. Given the reluctance of some organizations to send women, especially those with family responsibilities, on overseas assignments, the need for international experience for would-be directors (Daily, et al 2000), would remain unfulfilled. Also, although this country has more women than elsewhere poised to assume leadership positions (Rosener 1995, Korn Ferry International with UCLA Anderson, 1993), achievement of professional fulfillment has exacted a high personal cost (Powell, 1988) for US women managers, who continue to identify stereotyping as a primary factor impeding their strife for the top (Heidrick and Struggles, 1986).

New Zealand: Although statutory requirements compelling equal opportunities initiatives (the State Sector Act, 1988) are prevalent, they relate only to the public sector. The status of women as Directors in private sectors has not received as much attention as other areas

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1 ‘old boys’ network: knowing the Chairman or Chief Executive socially when appointed.

2 Gordian Knot: ‘When a particular circumstance/phenomena is a riddle not a breakthrough’ as discussed by Rosener J (1995), America’s Competitive Secret: Women Managers, Oxford University Press, NY.
of women and work (Shilton et al 1996). A study of New Zealand’s top ten companies in 1992 showed that they had 89 directors and only two of these were women (NZPA, 1992). Another study, making comparisons between Australia and New Zealand, reported that 36 per cent of significant New Zealand companies had a woman on the board (Hall, 1994) as compared to 18 percent for Australia. Directors of private sector corporate boards in NZ continue to be overwhelmingly male locking out women from the legitimate opportunity to be involved at the highest rung of corporate decision making.

**Australia:** Australia may be unique in that it is now the norm for the chair and CEO to be different people (Korn/Ferry International, 1999). Therefore, in Australia the identity of a successful non-executive director is likely to include multiple directorships with at least one board chair position, since they will actively seek out additional board positions in the anticipation that at least one of these board positions will include the position of board chair. Lack of success of women in gaining significant numbers of appointments to corporate boards (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2001, Bilimoria, 2000) is a frequent topic for study. Other studies depict demographic composition of women directors by periodically re-sampling women directors (Holton, 2000, Korn Ferry International, 1999, Catalyst, 1998a, Catalyst, 1998b). Recent research also report on ‘old boys’ clubs’ (Patton and Baker, 1987). Given the strength of homophily among men it is not surprising that women have barriers to overcome to gain directorships (Oakley, 2000) and to be effective on the board (Bilimoria and Huse, 1997).

**Canada:** Although, women are increasingly being appointed to Boards of Directors of Canadian private sector organizations, they comprise only about five per cent of Canadian directors. About one-half of the CEOs surveyed indicated that having women on their boards had no impact on the board or the company (Burke, 1994c). It is evident that many corporate directors in Canada are members of an 'old boys' network and appear to have been cut out with a cookie cutter - they are male and white. The typical selection process is also flawed (Burke, 1994c, Leighton and Thain, 1993) resulting in change in the corporations’ selection criteria with leading companies looking for women with private sector experience.

(b) Paucity of Women in Top Management Teams (TMT)

The following section attempts to briefly cull out the emergent themes explicating scarcity of women in - Top Management Teams - TMT's which as this paper posits is the key theme for low representation of women in boardrooms.

When the Dutch retail giant Ahold’s CEO Cees Van Der Hoeven’s (2003) made the controversial statement "there’s not a woman in this country I would want on my board", (Van Der Boon, 2003) the furore it created is not the complete story. An examination of the truth behind this statement can be illuminate the subject at hand. An attempt has been made to categorise them as Person, Career and Organization related reasons for the dearth of women in TMTs.

**Person Related**

**Commitment:** Long hours and workaholism are considered as professional commitment. Commitment to being a parent seems to make you less

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3 Homophily: According to Ibarra’s research men prefer to have the same gender networks.
valuable as an employee. ‘They (women) can’t have it all, they have to choose what they want most’ (Rosener, 1995). Although, there is no reported differences in levels of workaholism in samples of women and men (Burke, 2000), culture applauds, glorifies, promotes, people who put jobs before families.

Motivation: Women are less interested than men in reaching senior management ranks, with authors postulating that the need for affiliation, achievement, power and self-actualisation in men and women are, in general, met in different ways (O’Connor, 2001). Examination of the four social motives; need for achievement, for affiliation, for power and the need for self actualisation (Hede and Ralston, 1993, Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989, McClelland and Steele, 1973, Maslow, 1962) reveal: Female managers are less likely than males to see progression to senior management position as a career goal. Women are more self-actualised than men because they aspire for a more balanced life. Women are more likely to abandon or choose not to compete for lucrative executive positions in order to do something that they ‘really love’.

Political incompetency & Need for Power: “Where women are, power is not” (Rendell, 1980). Whereas, male leaders typically operate from power bases, as “position” (Mackay, 1997, French and Raven, 1959) women usually avoid these types of power bases choosing a more personal, indirect type (Cantor and Bernay, 1992, Heim, 1992, Johnson, 1976). Those who seek happiness will not acquire power and would not use it well if they do acquire it (Nixon in Pfeiffer, 1992). Some believe that women are much more likely than are men to use power based on charisma, work record and contacts, as opposed to organizational position power (Rosener, 1990). Women’s attitude about power are less political. Women prefer power sharing. Women are more interested in ‘power to’ than ‘power over’ (Rosener, 1995, Shrank and Kanter, 1994, Reskin and Ross, 1992, Rosener, 1990). Also, women tend to re-evaluate their lives and redo priorities at various stages of their life. This may mean making lateral career moves rather than upward ones, starting their own business, spending more time with family, taking up a new hobby, becoming involved in community work or choosing a less demanding job.

Career Related

Women tend to chose a ‘career tree’ rather than a ‘career ladder’. (Working Woman (US magazine) — job-satisfaction survey conducted October, 1986). Labyrinth another metaphor associated with women leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007). When, Hennig & Jardim’s study of (1977) revealed that successful career women have in common a few characteristics: 1) having some idea of future career goals 2) hard work, 3) determination 4) perseverance 5) commitment to their careers 6) achieving position and status despite many barriers, it seemed that women who wanted to be in the top had finally found a clear compass. But three decades later the need to clarify the compass seems to persist. In fact, the haze and mist around the compass due to the complexity in career opportunities for women, seems even more.

Women’s occupational aspirations have been found to be similar to those of men (Powell and Butterfield, 2003). Individuals who described themselves as possessing a greater amount of masculine characteristics and a lesser amount of feminine characteristics - a gender identity consistently reflected in stereotypes of males and managers are more likely to aspire to top management (Powell et al, 2002, Deaux and LaFrance, 1998, Deaux
and Kite, 1993, Bem, 1981, Powell and Butterfield, 1979). 'If you are happy doing what you are doing don’t be pushed into the next step because it’s the traditional thing to do' (Mattis, 1995).

**Organization Related**

Many CEO’s explain that the lack of general management/line experience, and operational/budgetary inexperience which does not allow women access to top positions (Mattis, 1995, Catalyst, 1990, Oakley, 2000) and thus, lack of access to line positions, is the reason for this scarcity. Other reasons cited for the access to line functions are that senior management often assumes that married women do not want international careers (Van der Boon, 2003). Another reason for the scarcity of women in boardrooms is because women often find themselves excluded from informal channels of communication and excluded from informal network (Deloitte and Touch LLP, 1996, Mattis, 1995, Catalyst, 1990). Not only higher performance standards are expected of women, but the absence of clear job descriptions for higher echelon jobs and the lack of formal systems for recruitment tend to create obstacles (Van Der Boon, 2003, International Labour Organization, 1997). The existence of informal male networks, sometimes referred to as 'old boys' networks' also tends to exclude women from top jobs (Van Der Boon, 2003, Oakley, 2000, International Labour Organization, 1997). The exclusion of women in 'old boys network' or in 'sporting encounters' — like football - leads to women having to be 'more male than men' to get top jobs in the boardroom. And, access to influential mentors is 'the single most important reason why men tend to rise higher than women' (Shrank and Kanter, 1994).

Harvard Business School Professor Regina Herzlinger says: 'Women will become Fortune 500 CEOs in large numbers around 2010' (Aburdene and Naisbitt, 1992). These numbers are still missing. Since contemporary thinking conceptualizes a feminine style of leadership that is singularly different from its male counterpart (Rosener, 1995, Aburdene and Naisbitt, 1992, White, 1992, Cantor and Bernay, 1992, Fierman, 1990, Rosener, 1990, Rudolph, 1990, Loden, 1985), and with claims that talents, experiences, attitudes and skills which women bring with them are precisely those needed in the evolving post-industrial economy, there seems to be hope for women poised at TMTs awaiting entry into Corporate Boardrooms. Since, women are better at the human side, quicker to cut through hierarchy and impatient with cumbersome protocols (Heglesen, 1990) and with attributes like listening, well-developed interpersonal abilities, with labels of nurturance, gentleness, and empathy (Johnson, 1976 ) women are ideally suited to non-bureaucratic, employee-involved organizations of the new millennium, where teamwork and a free flow of information are paramount (Fierman, 1990). Some even attribute women leaders with the rare ability to create a strong *esprit de corps*.

That this confluence of abilities and required leadership capacities (Eagly and Carli, 2007, Heglesen, 1990) is creating unprecedented opportunities for women to play a vital role in leading transformational change in organizations, is the new hope. Another perspective is that full development of human resources is a key competitive advantage in the knowledge society. Letting talent rise to the top, regardless of where it is found and whether it is male or female, is essential to business success in free-market economies. Within this context, the equality of women in the workforce is no longer a politically correct luxury. It has become a competitive necessity. Organizations need to realize that utilizing women more fully is related to their survival (Rosener, 1995 Kanter,
1977). The full utilization of women in the workplace should not be only for moral or social reasons, but rather should be a strategy for competing economically and gaining a competitive advantage in the future (Wentling, 2003).

If for HR professionals 'humanization' of the corporates is a critical issue then the idea of the 'feminization' of corporates is not a far fetched thought, given that both these agendas are aimed at seeking/providing balance to organizations!

Will they (women) hold together the firm, enabling it to achieve a better balance in the objectives they set themselves? Will they break through the 'glass ceiling', not so much to usurp men at senior levels but to create a better balance in the direction in which the whole is moving?

— Meredith Belbin

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WHY WOMEN LEAVE?

SARAH HANSON

Abstract

The number of women reaching the board remains unaccountably low, despite regulations and apparently equal opportunities. Sarah Hanson finds out what more employers can do to keep women from leaving the workplace — and why they should bother.

"The sight of a woman in the British boardroom is rare enough; that of one in the managing director's chair [is] almost as exotic as a pair of nesting ospreys."

These words were written by the late Carol Kennedy in a March 1984 article for Director. Back then figures were hard to come by and Kennedy was forced to guess at the percentage of women who reached director level, estimating two per cent of Britain's 250,000 directors. Today, according to Val Singh, co-author of the Female FTSE-100 report: "The number of top FTSE-100 companies with more than one female director has gone from 12, in 2000 to 29 in 2006-moving beyond tokenism." Yet Singh believes the lack of women getting to executive directorships is still a "serious issue". The concern is with future supply. A survey by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) published in March shows the number of female senior managers working in major UK businesses has fallen by over 40 per cent in the last five years. In 2002, 38 per cent of senior manager positions in the FTSE-350 were occupied by women; this is now just 22 per cent. Grant Thornton's International Business Report, meanwhile, found the percentage of women getting senior management roles in medium-sized UK businesses (between 50 and 200 employees) has stagnated, rising only two per cent between 2004 and 2007. Glenda Stone, chief executive of Aurora, a women-focused recruitment advertising agency, believes bluechip organizations are "getting better, spending more on recruiting and retaining women, helping women back after maternity leave and understanding their needs," she says. It's the largest organizations and the smallest that are best at this sort of flexibility, she adds, with mid-sized companies literally stuck in the middle. "They have a lot of catching up to do in order to compete with the big boys-unless they have a critical mass of women who are saying 'yes, come and work here, we like it', it is hard for them to attract top female talent."

So Are Professional Women Opting Out?

It's a question economist and author Sylvia Ann Hewlett raises in her latest book, Off Ramps and On Ramps. The book addresses the problem of the "hidden brain drain" of women leaving the workplace, only to return in a reduced capacity-or not at all. While Hewlett's research was primarily US-based, the issues are, she believes, universal and driven by global demographics. "Sidetracking women is an unaffordable luxury," she says. Sarah Churchman, head of diversity at PwC, agrees, predicting that women exiting FTSE-350 companies in Britain will create problems for the future. "Businesses tend to pay more attention to gender issues in senior positions and there appears to be an assumption that a supply from the middle ranks will eventually feed through. For big companies at least, this pipeline is shrinking at a worrying rate," she says. The UK government's sufficiently concerned to weigh in with a heavy endorsement of flexible working.
“Creating more quality part-time roles is key to increasing the number of women in senior roles, which can extend a company’s portfolio of skills, provide role models for younger, high-potential women and place companies closer to their customer base,” says Meg Munn, deputy minister for women. But this is a limited solution and fails to address the underlying question:

**Are Women Making it to Senior Positions Or Not, and if so, Why Are They Still Leaving?**

Singh suggests one reason for the low numbers of women executive directors is that boards are getting smaller. “Most companies have gone down to four executive directorships, where before there might have been six,” she explains. “This is largely as a result of the Higgs review, which recommends an even number of executives and non-executives on the board.” Hewlett’s research found women’s reasons for leaving the workplace balanced between family commitments such as childcare (in the UK, nursery costs far outstrip inflation, according to Daycare Trust figures) and, increasingly, elder-care pressures; and work-related factors such as an unsatisfying job—a complaint of 52 per cent of women in business—or a stalled career. Some who reach the top don’t want to stay there, says Singh. “The rewards don’t match what they want in their lives,” she explains. “Women are not so concerned with status, they want more challenge in a role and to feel connected to the firm.”

Deirdre Anderson of Cranfield School of Management recently interviewed senior businesswomen leaving a well known professional services firm and found a number of other factors at play, too. The company had introduced initiatives to encourage women to move up the corporate ladder, but a restructuring had sidelined some of them and left them unchallenged. “This led them to question the sacrifices they had made previously—such as the ongoing demands of travel and work-life balance—to constantly deliver high achievements,” says Anderson. A Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) report, *Women in the boardroom: the risks of being at the top*, published in March, found that a large number of business leaders will only appoint a woman into a very senior post in times of crisis and poor performance—leaving female leaders facing a form of hidden discrimination that leaves them more likely to fail than their male counterparts. Dianah Worman, diversity advisor at the CIPD, refers to this concept as the glass cliff. "Women are only considered when the situation is more risky," she says. "These old-fashioned attitudes are not only unfair and discriminatory towards women but they leave organizations shooting themselves in the foot." Adds Singh: "Social connections are more difficult to make the more senior you are in an organization. It's an issue common to men, too, but there are fewer role models at senior level to guide women." Chey Garland, founder and CEO of Garlands Call Centres and a mother of two, agrees: “Women I talk to often feel isolated with the challenge of being a working mum at board level. The reality is that kids get sick or need a doctor's appointment. Men don't have these extra pressures if they have wives,” she says. And there's a much greater stigma attached to men taking leave for parental duties, according to Hewlett’s research.

The fundamental issue, though, is cultural: “It seems that men tune into a way of working that is automatic, or second nature to them but which is not natural to a woman,” explains Worman. “Trying to associate with their male colleagues and behaving as a male manager isn’t the natural management style for a lot of women,” adds Nick Parke, who set up Talking Talent, a coaching and consulting firm to help mentor companies and women before, during and after maternity leave. “They try to conform with the male
majority but if they are not being authentic to themselves-their own personality and management style-then that is draining.” Parke believes the workplace has been designed for the progression of men-what Hewlett describes as the “male competitive model”. What is needed is a deep-rooted culture change-starting with some simple maths. “Companies need to increase the number of women at each level of the company,” he says. But what would persuade the boss of a thriving business to throw out a perfectly good model in order to accommodate the “non-linear” work styles?

Alysoun Stewart, head of Grant Thornton’s strategic Services Group, believes the UK has much to do to encourage balance between work and family commitments. We are taking a too-traditional approach to recruitment, too, says the CIPD’s Worman. “We’re still thinking traditionally but the old ways of doing things don’t work in this world. We need more creativity, innovation and responsiveness to changes in the workplace and to be in tune with what’s going on.” Adds Parke: “What companies are still struggling with is losing women, particularly around maternity. They need to look at how they can support them better, for example with flexible working,” he says. But Garland questions the “have it all” expectations of working women: “At the time I had my twins I thought I’d work part-time but the reality was that my job is a big job and working part-time didn’t combine well with the corporate world,” she says. Although Garland believes women can have a family and rise to the top, she believes they need to be very organised and know how to prioritise. “I had to get a nanny so that I could work. Once I’d made that decision, it started to work for me.”

Departing women don’t always end up sidelined, either. Some of the most senior female executives can find themselves fulfilling work as a non-executive director.”For example, Penny Hughes, the ex-president of Coca-Cola UK, went off to have children and then came back and took on a portfolio of non-executive director roles. These women are making a career out of being NEDs,” says Singh. There is evidence, too, of women leaving to set up their own businesses. The latest DTI small business survey reveals the number of businesses that are wholly or predominantly owned by women has risen to 17 per cent. Cathy O’Donoghue is part of this trend. After her maternity leave, O’Donoghue was due to return to work as group HR manager for Tesco. But during her absence, a restructuring meant that her hours of daily travel had doubled. “This would have been physically impossible for me,” she says. "I left Tesco and set up HR Champions so that I had more control over the hours I worked.” Hewlett talks about “extreme jobs”, quoting Reuters’s chair and well known diversity champion Niall FitzGerald: "There’s so much pressure out there to look tough, to act tough. It’s hard to go against the grain-our alpha culture is very strong.” It is because of this, Hewlett predicts, that an even larger proportion of the workforce, both male and female, will need to “off ramp” for short periods in the future. "The out of date [organizational] model needs to be supplanted," she says. "Behind women, there’s Generation Y, who want more work-life balance, and retiring baby boomers, who will want to chunk out work in more creative ways rather than retiring completely.” In a skills-starved, knowledge economy, only the most short-termist, inflexible employers would remain unmoved by the arguments for remodelling the workplace.

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GIVING MERITOCRACY A CHANCE

SUNITA CHERIAN

Abstract

The article starts with the present scenario on changing the status of women in corporate world. Today organizations are willing to hire women and we can see a change in the earlier male dominated corporate world. Education has helped provide equal opportunities for women. Retention policies in organizations have also changed. Women employees are getting equal benefits like their male counterparts. Women are also reaching the top management levels but again the numbers are few. Woman have challenges throughout their career especially after marriage like parenting and other domestic responsibilities.

The article also mentions some of the initiatives taken at Wipro to have a gender diverse work environment and also the facilities provided to support women. A woman who has a good support system from the Organization where she works, her family and her spouse can definitely be a good leader.

About the author

Sunita R. Cherian, an Electrical and Electronics engineer and a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration, is currently General Manager - Talent Engagement and Development at Wipro Technologies. She has held responsibilities in sales and marketing, evangelizing world-class process implementation in Wipro and in Human Resources.

Sunita, currently heads the TED function for three Divisions in Wipro Technologies, with total employee strength of over 20,000 employees globally. She is a member of Wipro’s Prevention of Sexual Harassment Committee, is a certified Six Sigma Black Belt, Master Coach and a PAPI specialist.

She is the President of the "Women of Wipro" core committee and has launched quite a few initiatives as part of this.

Six in ten businesses world-wide have women in senior management positions. Corporate India too contributes to this global trend, recording a 14% increase in the participation of women in senior levels. A recent study conducted by Catalyst on the Fortune 500 groups revealed that companies with the highest representation of women on their boards attained significantly higher financial performance, on average, than those with the lowest representation.

Such impressive facts don’t often go unnoticed. The male dominated Corporate India of some years ago has changed significantly. Today we’re seeing a new order emerge across industry segments, celebrating their vibrant, confident teams of women employees, right alongside their peers. There have been positive shifts in the last few years that have made it easier for these women to contribute significantly to organizational growth.
The change first began at lower levels in organizations. This went hand-in-hand with higher emphasis on the education of the girl-child. The improving female: male ratio in graduate courses created a larger talent pool of determined, technically trained women, eager to make a difference, and to leave a mark on industry. Interestingly, data shows that the future pool of professional talent will be disproportionately female.

In the last two decades, women have been steadily joining Corporates from technical and management campuses. The growth in the IT industry at the same time, offers them a respectable and rewarding career path. So much so that today, many Corporates boast of the percentage of women at the entry level being equal to that of men, and in some categories, higher. Many of these women have done well and moved up. So today, it’s not just the entry level, but probably the first few levels which enjoy a fair share of women employees.

These are all good trends, but are they enough? The percentage of women leaders falls as one goes up the management levels. One reason may be that the momentum started at the lower levels only a few years back, and for this talent pool to be experienced and to reach leadership levels takes some amount of natural progression time. But there are other reasons for a lot of capable women not shattering the proverbial glass ceiling.

At Wipro, if one analyzed why women achievers left at a time when they looked set to build a great career, one would see reasons like parenthood, needing more time with the family, and accompanying a spouse who’s been transferred to another city or country. These realities usually happen about 5 - 7 years after a woman has started her career, and were traditionally seen as outside the control of an organization.

When polled, the overwhelming feedback was that women employees wished to be treated like their peers, and not preferentially. That is self-respect. One woman leader put things in perspective when she said "I like that I was never reminded of my gender even once in my past 16 years of association, which speaks about the culture of the organization".

Meritocracy can be practiced without being rigid. The flexibility required is not related to work performance, but to creating a level playing field for that performance to happen. So we focused on the career derailers. Today, we offer benefits like extended maternity leave, Leave on loss of pay to take care of children, half day work, childcare in some locations, and escorted travel at odd times. Our global presence has also often helped women employees be placed in a convenient location when accompanying their family during relocation.

One might ponder if these are necessary actions by the Corporate. Ask any woman achiever, or any achiever for that matter, and one is likely to hear that a support system is essential for success. Unlike the older days, most families are nuclear today, and very mobile. But very like the old days, raising children to become achievers, caring for the family, and being the emotional anchor at home remain very much an expectation of the lady of the home. These and other emotional tugs usually become real around the time women approach leadership levels in the Corporate environment. At these times, a supportive husband can make all the difference. But one also looks to the organization, and often a close circle of friends, for support in creating a work-life balance. I believe organizations...
can, and should help. They would only gain from it, in stature, and in employee loyalty.

Wipro recently launched a “Women of Wipro” (WOW) forum as part of its diversity council. This forum would create and implement frameworks that support the career aspirations of our growing women employees, and be the organizational conscience of our policies for women. We appreciate that women are different, and would make their mark not by “playing like the boys”, but by bringing in high levels of sensitivity, inclusion and team working.

Conceived not as a “club”, but as a serious forum, senior leaders, both women and men, from different businesses would work collaboratively though WOW to ensure that each of our businesses implements and benefits from its initiatives. Through a philosophy of inclusion and enablement, WOW would promote a level playing field for women employees to contribute at every level and build great careers.

In summarizing, I must say the positive environment all around us makes me confident that we’ll soon see a new Corporate India brimming with the confidence of greater balance and perspectives in its leadership.

And as a Wiproite of many years, I’m proud to see Wipro leading the way.

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Abstract

There is a need to increase the participation of women in the corporate workforce in India. Currently, the participation is about 6% of the total workforce. There are many reasons that explain the low numbers of women in key leadership positions: some of them being lack of role models, lack of management experience, commitment to family etc. In order to ensure that more women transition to senior leadership positions, organizations need to have gender friendly HR practices, focus on competency development of women, have forums for women to express etc.

There is a need to also expand the role of successful women to be mentors to other aspiring women in the organization. A process of well-established mentorship will enable women to build their competencies, enhance their visibility and develop the leadership competencies to become effective leaders in their organizations. Mentorship can be a very effective tool for leadership development.

About the author

Anu Wakhlu is the founder Director of the Pune-based Management Consulting Firm "Pragati Leadership Institute (P) Ltd." Her key responsibilities include facilitation of senior leadership programs, capacity enhancement of the team in Pragati and forging strategic alliances. Anu has worked on a number of national and international assignments with leading corporates in India and globally on topics of leadership, facilitation, team building, open space etc. Anu is passionate about issues related to women leadership and has written a number of papers on it.

Developing Women Mentors In Corporate India

In a recent survey conducted by CII (November 2005), on “Understanding the Levels of Women Empowerment in the Workplace”, data showed that the ratio of women employees to the total workforce was only 6%!

The largest numbers of women employees are in the Information Technology, ITES and the Financial Services Sector. The reasons are fairly obvious. All these sectors are knowledge driven, offer good working conditions and a friendly environment. The BPO sector in India for example has nearly 50-60% of women as their employees. Many of these are from second and third tier cities.

In a recent interaction with some leading industries in Pune, there was a clear business decision that emerged. They were looking at hiring more women across all the different levels of management. This came from organizations who were predominately manufacturing based. They were not talking about employing women
in the support functions but in core functions such as sales, production on the shop floor, supply chain etc. This is certainly a healthy trend with industries finally waking up to the potential of women as a contributory workforce.

Along with the growing number of women contributors in the Industry today, we need to put into place mechanisms, systems and policies that will continue to attract women to join the workforce and build their careers in the same. In a recent interview, Indira Nooyi of Pepsi Co, said that multinationals have been able to create a conducive atmosphere that has facilitated women employees to take on leadership roles. She felt that Indian companies also need to provide a more inclusive participation of women to boost the growth of the entire country.

The CII study also revealed that the ratio of women employees to total employees is only 4% at senior and middle management levels while it is 16% at junior management levels. Data also showed that only 1% of organizations were led by women across India. In the Western zone of India, this proportion increased to 4% compared to the rest of the country.

In a recent study done on barriers to women’s advancement in Europe, stereotypes and pre-conceptions about women’s roles and abilities are seen to be the number one barrier to advancement. This is followed by lack of role models, lack of general management experience, commitment to family and personal responsibilities and lack of mentoring.

What do we need to do to ensure that women not only join the corporate sector but also transition into leadership positions in their organizations? My understanding is that some of the following will help a lot:

**Having Women-Friendly HR Policies**

HR policies in all companies definitely need to be both men and women friendly! However, we need to be more sensitive to the needs of women given the fact that they still walk the tight-rope between managing their homes as well as their work. Companies that have progressive and women-friendly policies are more likely to both retain, engage and promote women in leadership positions.

IBM is one of the many organizations that have a successful gender diversity success story. Nearly 26% of its workforce consists of women. IBM follows policies of equal opportunity, affirmative action, cultural awareness and work-life balance.

Similarly, ICICI offers “flexitime” and “buddy systems” at work for its women employees Having policies that cater to the family needs of women does ensure that they remain in the organization and therefore can rise to senior positions. These can be related to maternity leave, pick-up and drop facilities, flexi-time options, health-related benefits, day care and rest room facilities, options for going on sabbaticals, security concerns etc.

**Investing in the Competency Development of Women**

In order to ensure that women transition into senior roles, it is important for the organization to invest in the competency development of its key women personnel. This could be through the process of identifying the high-potential employees and investing in a fast track development program for them. This program can look at developing both the functional/role competencies as well as the leadership skill-sets that are critical for women to progress in their career. A well-designed and systematic process which caters to the specific leadership needs of women would significantly enhance their career advancement process. Women need more
inputs on networking, strategic thinking, accountability and career advancement compared to men.

Forums for Women

Organizations need to look at creating forums which can provide an opportunity for women employees to come and express their concerns and challenges and find solutions. The solutions finally have to come from the employees themselves but it is the organization’s responsibility to provide opportunities for this. Open Space Technology (OST) could be one such forum which can be provided to the women employees. Open Space is a methodology/process created by Dr Harrison Owen which provides a "space" for people to come out with what has meaning and passion for them. Open Space works on the twin principles of passion and responsibility. Participants come out with what are their challenges, concerns and post these on the agenda wall. Other people who are also attending, decide which of the agenda items they are also resonant with and small discussion forums get set up to discuss the concerns and seek solutions for it. OST could be a powerful way in which women can have a "say" in what matters to them and come out with solutions that can be either implemented by them or lobbied for with others.

Beyond providing a forum for surfacing concerns/issues, it also provides a forum for sharing of feelings, emotions that otherwise are ignored at the work-front. Providing the space for emotional expression helps to bond people and give a feeling that the company cares for them. When people feel "cared "for, they are likely to remain and be engaged with the organization.

Awareness and Education of Male Employees

As Corporate India is getting set to increase the number of women in its workforce, there needs to be attention paid to the education and orientation of the male employees in the organizations to the dynamics of the changing situation. We all would have observed that with talented and ambitious women coming into the work-front, there is a need to ensure that their male colleagues see them as equals and as their peers and are as supportive as they are with their other colleagues. It is often seen that in male dominated domains (like sales teams, production functions etc) male employees are unfamiliar with how to work with women colleagues. Male employees at shop-floors as well as at supervisory and managerial positions may also need to undergo some kind of orientation programs that will help them to get used to having female colleagues at work. They need to be educated on the company’s policies of being an equal opportunity employer as well as sexual harassment policies and ways of interaction. This will ensure a more friendly work-environment.

Similarly organizations may also have to invest in the education of the families of their women employees so that they support them in their growth in the company. Very often, parents or husbands put a lot of pressure on women to ignore their responsibilities at work and be more focussed on their role as daughters, wives, mothers etc. This creates a low focus at work. Education/orientation of families to
the new enhanced role of women could be of help.

While we can do many more things to enhance the leadership development of women, one of the most important ways could be through creating a mentorship program/process for women in organizations.

The word "mentor" is widely understood to be a guide, wise friend, counsellor etc. The word mentor has its origin in Greek philosophy - Mentor was a friend of Odyssey who entrusted his son to him while he went to war. Mentor looked after both his son and his home in his absence.

Mentorship therefore denotes a process in which a person provides guidance, advice to her mentee. The mentor encourages her mentee to explore options, take risks, deploy their full potential at work, overcome perceived and real hurdles etc. The mentor also provides a role-model and sounding board for aspiring women employees.

Institutionalising a process of mentorship for women in organizations can be a powerful way to ensure that we create a pipeline of women leaders in the organization. The mentoring process is one which is cost-effective and also uses the capacity of the internal leaders in the organization to develop people.

Organizations can do this up by setting up a mentoring co-ordinating team whose prime responsibilities would be to manage this project. Successful women in the organizations who could be the mentors need to be trained in how to mentor younger women. The mentoring process can help the younger women employees learn how to build their careers, get valuable tips from the more successful women on how to manage their careers, handle any emotional issues, and build a successful career. Having a woman mentor would make it easier for the younger women to discuss both personal and professional issues.

The entire process will need good co-ordination and management. Both the mentees and mentors need to see how this process is of benefit to them. Measurement criteria would also need to be set up to measure the effectiveness of the project.

Organizations can do a lot of things to ensure that they have a good representation of women at all levels of leadership in the organization. Women too need to look at their own career growth in the organization with equal interest and passion.

I would like to end this article with this famous poem, quoted by Nelson Mandela in his inaugural speech in 1994. This is dedicated to all women in India and the planet.

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate
Our deepest fear is that we powerful beyond measure
It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us
We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?
Actually, who are we not to be?
You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people
Won't feel insecure around you
We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us
It's not just in some of us
It's in everyone
And as we let our own light shine
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same
As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates others."
MENTORING ... MANTRA FOR WOMEN LEADERS

PRADEEP MALLICK

Abstract

The articles covers various aspects of a mentorship programme. Some of the reasons being — global competition, ‘work-life’ balance and changing economic status of the country. The author elaborates that in the age of globalization, organizations need talented people and should also know how to retain their manpower. A mentor aims at helping others by improving the quality of talented people in his organization. Mentor programme are personalized into formal/ informal; age restricted or designation specific. He has also differentiated a male and female mentor. He elaborates that women mentors are more successful as women in general are intuitive, sensitive and emotional which is key to the success of women. He ends with the example of how a good mentor can shape the future of his team in "Chakde India", a Bollywood movie on the Indian Hockey Team.

About the author

The author is former MD Wartsila India, Past Chairman CII (WR), Past President, Bombay Chamber and Founder Chairman of The Listening Post.

Why Mentoring?

Although the concept of mentoring started in the West only in the 1980s, the growing popularity is a response to compelling needs. Mentoring is now widely recognized in the West for its impact in leveraging personal and organizational development and as a highly effective way to quickly ramp up an employee’s performance. It has just started emerging in India.

The challenge before organizations today is profitable, sustainable, inclusive growth with a dire need for care for the environment. The challenge before executives today is containing attrition, recruiting the right talent and retaining high performers. In the process, executive after executive works longer hours whilst helplessly witnessing a deteriorating work-life balance. Escalating Corporate profits provide mounting performance bonuses, but little opportunities for executives to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Every one is stretched, and this tells on nerves and on family harmony. The acceleration of productivity in businesses brings along with it challenges in managing and enhancing relationships. Today, executives expect emotional intelligence from supervisors and colleagues, but find its supply scarce.

Organizations implement mentoring at all levels of a company structure, from graduate recruits to top management. However, as with any programme or initiative, success is dependent ultimately on a high degree of senior level buy-in and commitment. Without such support, programmes risk death through lack of coordination and focus.
The People Challenge

There is a buzz about India. The economy is booming and India is on a roll. Business opportunities abound. For the first time ever, MNC Global Boards meet in India, with the express purpose of observing first-hand what it is that is making India suddenly come alive. In the melee, they are racing each other to announce fresh investments, new plants and global R&D and KPO Centres for outsourcing from India.

Simultaneously, globalization opportunities have got Indian Companies looking beyond our shores demonstrating their entrepreneurial and technological prowess in the global arena as emerging Indian MNCs.

But growth and boom in a globalised world requires People. For it is people who are the key to managing complex strategies and organizations. Yet one hears a continuing plaintive cry of a shortage of people that the growing business demands, compounded by escalating attrition. The booming economy demands manning - and suddenly, despite our amazing advantageous demographics, we are facing an acute shortage of talent. The new refrain is Talent Hunt. Every Company expects to hire people who are ready to deliver. That, however, calls for the availability of the right skillsets, the appropriate talent fit and relevant training. As a consequence, the appetite for growth has compelled Corporates to poach readily available skills. Thus, executive challenges have increased from merely pressure on margins to fighting attrition, recruiting, training and retaining talent. And this is a huge challenge, for there are no quick fixes here.

Especially when one considers the worsening work-life balance. As business practices accelerate productivity, they also consequently introduce contradictions into relationships.

So what do we have? A booming economy. Tremendous growth opportunities. Long work hours and a warped work-life balance. A shortage of skilled talent. Attrition. Frustration in the work place. Stress at home and work.

In today's rapidly changing, globally attuned world, there is a perceptible need to hone communication and relationship skills, to improve adaptability to rapid change and to enhance respect for people of diverse backgrounds. A lot remains to be done to resolve employee-related dilemmas - for example, whilst objective appraisals and honest feedback are recognized as essential for employee development, executives are generally loathe to provide feedback to their juniors, being fearful of the emotion that the candour will generate. Clearly, companies need a systematic means of engaging with senior leaders as individuals.

Enter the Mentor

Thinking of a mentor might conjure up visions of a wise druid in a white beard and flowing robes. Imagine having a wise, experienced person alongside you, to help you set important life goals and develop the skills to achieve them. Someone whose prime motivation is your success, someone immune from but aware of company dynamics and politics, someone who takes time to listen and to guide you without any personal or political agenda, someone who is unbiased and non-threatening. There are few corporate executives who would not benefit from and who would not jump at a chance to avail of such a relationship.

Mentoring is often referred to as the 'transfer of wisdom'. It is the process by which an individual learns from someone who has worn the same shoes and travelled the same path, someone metaphorically older and wiser. The mentor could work in the same organization, although external mentors are increasingly preferred.
Mentoring is a customized, unique method of improving executive effectiveness through active listening and the use of questioning techniques that honour the person's individuality.

**How Mentoring Works?**

The human dimension of mentoring is what makes it work - and also what makes it well nigh impossible to measure. Basically, mentors provide individual leaders the objective feedback needed to nourish their growth and help them excel. The 360 degree appraisal feedback is often a useful data base and provides phenomenal insights into an individual's interpersonal strength. Surprisingly, even high-flyers rarely pause to reflect on the feedback, their own behaviour and how it impacts colleagues and the organization at large. Mentors help make mentees aware of these characteristics and behaviour patterns, and then engage in a form of active learning that integrates organizational goals with wholesome personal development and joyful living. This helps leaders improve retention, enhance teamwork, align individuals to collective goals, facilitate succession and support organizational change.

Mentoring is a relationship in which latent competencies are unfolded, potential skills are honed and both parties - the mentor and the mentee - experience mutual learning. Mentoring encapsulates a relationship rather than an activity, without necessarily having an expiry date. One can thus have life-long mentors, people who have always taken a genuine interest in our continued development and learning, out of an innate love or friendship.

**Mentoring vs Coaching**

Mentoring generally does not call for domain knowledge, but the process helps the mentee arrive at the appropriate solution to their vexing problem. A good mentor must possess inter-personal skills of a very high order combined with a genuine love and concern for people. Coaching, on the other hand, generally calls for direct experience of the client's formal occupational role. It is specific, goal- and task-oriented, improvement and skills focused.

Imagine a Cricket or a Hockey Coach and one visualises the main features of a Coach. Although there are some key differences between coaching and mentoring, there are similarities too, and the edges are undoubtedly blurred. In both cases one-on-one interaction is the key, and a good coach will also mentor and a good mentor will coach, as appropriate to the situation and the relationship. Both are processes that enable individuals to achieve their full potential. It is essential, however, to determine what your needs are and to ensure that you receive the kind and level of service you require, without worrying about the semantics of name.

**Formal Mentoring**

Mentoring can be formal or informal. Formal mentoring involves a triangular relationship between the mentor, the mentee and the client (mentee's employer), who agree on a set of explicit goals that genuinely further the mentee's interests as well as the common good of the organization.

When John, the CEO of a Financial services Company asked Deepak, my friend from school and now an established Mentor, to coach four of his reportees, Deepak was flattered. He did of course ask John pertinent questions - 'Why me?' "Why don't you mentor them yourself?" 'What are your expectations from this process?' etc. John explained his preference for an external mentor, being a non-threatening, unbiased, one-step-removed entity.

A formal mentoring engagement runs for about 12 months, averaging one meeting
per month. The initial interactions are spent in building a rapport. Deepak, for example, had explained what his mentees could expect from him - Commitment, Confidentiality, Understanding, Relationship of Trust and Sharing, A Sounding Board and Broad Shoulders, A Friend, Honest and Fair Feedback. Equally, Deepak had expectations from his mentees which included Commitment, Confidence, Ambition and Goal-Setting, Openness and Trust, Understanding of their own expectations, and an Understanding that they are indeed the masters of their own destiny and that the mentor does not have all the answers.

Mentors can help influence mentees reach major goals in life. The mentee must of course define his goal and expectations and must believe that he/she is the master of his/her own destiny. Even more, he/she must develop confidence and trust in the mentor and commitment to the process.

For the senior executive, the mentor is an ideal sounding board and a powerful facilitator for personal growth along with behavioural and attitudinal change. He or she is an objective partner who will support and yet challenge views, behaviours and attitudes in a constructive manner. Above all, the executive gains an ally whose primary motivation is their success.

When Deepak asked his mentees how they benefited from having a mentor, they almost all uniformly cited having a sounding board as a major factor - someone who would listen to them objectively, facilitate them in working through their problems and inspire them to reflect on a viable course of action of their choosing.

In formal mentoring, the first few meetings (months) are spent in getting to know each other, building trust and confidence. Seasoned mentors mark time over this period. This is not a period to push ahead with goal-setting agendas and expectations out of the mentoring exercise. Patience does indeed pay in building sustainable relationships over the long term. Experience shows that those very same initially 'tentative' mentees would, a year later, admit that mentoring was indeed a process whereby the experienced mentor holds up a mirror to the mentee in a soft light, but enough for the latter to recognise his blemishes quite clearly.

Gradually, over months, an understanding develops. It works best when the formal mentoring relationship moves naturally, seamlessly into an informal mentoring arrangement. The relationship may never be as close as when an informal mentoring relationship gets going, but sometimes the initial time spent in building the relationship over the year or so helps in bringing about a good understanding between the two, with openness, trust and confidence in each other.

**Informal Mentoring**

My childhood friend Nick is a natural Informal Mentor. People locate him by word of mouth and generally open up to him, confiding in him and sharing their problems. They use him as a Sounding Board, a Shoulder to cry on, a Friend and Guide for their work-related problems, which also have a large bearing on work-life balance issues.

When I asked Nick the reasons why his mentees confide in him in preference to confiding in someone else, he presented the following list after conferring with his women mentees -

Kumud found that Nick -
- was sensitive to non-verbals
- listens actively
- has good memory recall and correlation to past events
- asks intelligent questions and thus creates a full picture
- has a friendly disposition, is calm and communicative
– is open minded and creative
– is caring, unbiased, non intimidating
– gives plenty of time
– has a keen interest in the mentee’s development
– creates a high level of trust and builds rapport
– does not impose his will or opinion, just guides

Brinda said she shared thoughts with Nick because -
– he knows where I am coming from
– he helps me take an objective view of my life
– with exchange of ideas, I introspect better after our meetings
– our interactions allow me to look at myself in a different light
– he has a detached unbiased approach to issues
– I am comfortable with his value systems

Richa had this to say of Nick
– I sometimes speak to him to seek a solution to a problem, but not always so.
– I like sharing and expressing my concerns to receive understanding, a patient hearing, empathy.
– he is a good listener.
– his experience sheds light on a point which was not clear to me
– he never responds to my problem with a counter problem, just stays neutral.

Informal mentor relations such as those Nick enjoys can be life long for they are indeed non threatening, unbiased, not bound through a Corporate’s "triangular" agreement, and where the mentee has found the mentor him/herself.

With informal mentoring, the relationships usually just evolve. The start is casual, without a structure or an intended, planned approach. The mentor is the senior, wiser, experienced person. The younger one may have worked with him or heard of him and over time the mentor shares experiences, provides feedback and adds to the person’s well being and growth. Help is informal and casual and there is no formal reference to each other as ‘mentor’ or ‘mentee’. Meetings are by design but not necessarily scheduled as developmental mentoring sessions.

These relationships can continue for years, without a formal ‘charting of progress’ and is testimony to the positivity of the relationship. Informal mentoring is a beautiful method of helping someone without the pressure of setting goals. There is a natural coming together of the two persons in the relationship.

Formal or informal, mentoring cannot be a structured process. The irony is that the more organised and structured you attempt to make mentoring, the less likely it is to work. Of course it is best when you can pick your own mentor, instead of having your boss assign you one, for then it evolves naturally and can potentially move into a life-long mentoring relationship.

Women in Mentoring

Deepak had met Nick socially at my place once and they had hit it off. Being in the same work sphere helped the meeting of the minds; the fact that Deepak was more into formal mentoring and Nick into informal mentoring did not matter. Deepak knew the potential that existed for sharing of ideas between them, and being a people-person himself, knew the value that a professional yet informal exchange with Nick would yield. He went over the points he had wanted to clarify that morning for his meeting with Nick, points that any experienced mentor like himself would come across from time to time, points that help reinforce ideas, affirm practices and develop convictions.
Nick had mentioned to Deepak in their first meeting of how informal mentoring works for him. Deepak, who had interacted with women in his formal mentoring, opened by enquiring about Nick’s experiences during his informal mentoring meets. Indeed, he was reinforcing his own ideas on what it is that mentors have. Deepak wrote feverishly as Nick recounted …

Given that women are sensitive yet practical, emotional yet strong, logical, intuitive, empathetic and are inherently endowed with powers of reasoning, they make excellent mentors. They are quick to spot undercurrents in organizations, and their ability to effectively detect nuances often helps bring in a timely delicate touch to defuse fragile situations. The West has numerous examples of successful women mentors. The same will apply in India as the mentoring space opens up. It would also be easy for women in India to move in to occupy this specialized niche, considering that many of them lead their Companies or head the People domain in highly successful careers. The increasing number of women entrepreneurs and women executives breaking glass ceilings in an otherwise male-dominated bastion augurs well for an increasing number to choose mentoring as an area of core competence.

Mentors have to possess a real interest in others and specifically in their development and learning. This is crucial, as it is this that drives their ability to put the issues and concerns of their mentees ahead of the other things that the rest of us find more important. Surely, the mentors’ role is essentially to accelerate the rate at which a person learns. Hence, mentors fundamentally provide individual leaders the objective feedback needed to nourish their growth and help them excel. It is possible to develop mentor competence, but only for those who possess interpersonal skills - either potential or existing. The paradox is that those most keen to become mentors do not have the innate people skills, and that equally, many intuitive, ‘natural’ mentors do not recognise their own abilities. Mentors also have to accept that in all likelihood, they will have to put a lot more in than they get back.

Effective mentoring requires a lot more than common sense and enthusiasm. And like in leadership, the individual needs to have the basic ingredients of active listening, empathy, building trust, love for people, a genuine interest in their well-being and development. There are some individuals who are additionally gifted in the art of encouraging and inspiring others and providing them positive, corrective feedback in a manner that is received in the right spirit. With these basics, it is possible for mentors to evolve and aspiring mentors with potential can imbibe and hone mentoring skills.

Women as Mentees

Women make good mentees too, but more often when they get to choose their own mentor as outlined by Nick. A formal "triangular" mentoring programme will of course work well if the Company-chosen mentor is himself sensitive to appreciate the woman’s perspective and recognize her worth as an achiever in a male-dominated organization.

Those who have appreciated the learnings from Chakde India will readily recall the journey of the Women’s Hockey Team in becoming world champions. It is worth recapitulating their key success factors that Deepak outlined when he was explaining the nuances to a keen, ever-learning Nick:

– the importance of humility, the absence of arrogance, avoidance of narrow
parochialism and that no employee is bigger than the organization he/she serves.

- That there is only one leader in an entity and his/her direction must be followed with respect and without demur.

- That self-discipline and teamwork wins matches on the field and orders in business.

- Trying to play solo, not sharing information at work or not seeking timely support only helps competition win.

- Team spirit is born out of respect for team mates, appreciation of their skills, reveling in their success and sharing in their joys and sorrows.

- For sustained success, never underestimate competition, but analyze their strengths and weaknesses.

**Celebrate Team Success Big Time**

The learnings from the film becomes more important and relevant for women, now that the glory of Indian Men's Hockey has evaporated from the international scene. It is perhaps an opportunity for women to show the way.

As in sport, Companies too can reclaim their glory or market position if leaders were to let the spotlight shine on the team members instead of hogging the limelight themselves.

After all, we know that Gandhiji became a Mahatma by serving, not by seeking.

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This article is inspired by readings from HBR, The Mentoring Group and The Coaching & Mentoring Network.
FINDING THE CALLING IN LIFE

NAMRATA GILL

Abstract

This article represents a leaf out of my professional life. More than a biography this tells of how finding my calling in life helped me surge ahead. It also depicts various learning’s and challenges faced at most milestones. It also talks of how development and growth needs more planning and perhaps some risks here and there. It is not a story of great resounding success but just a journey that I have embarked upon really. A major chunk of learning here is that being a woman in this profession, I never found stumbling block ever. Never encountered a ‘glass ceiling’ and on the contrary it helped me with my profession.

About the author

Namrata Gill is currently working as people development manager in NXP semiconductors India Private Limited. She has about 16 years of experience in people development field both in academia and organizations. Her current role also includes several global roles such as global technical leader development and global learning council for NXP Semiconductors. She also facilitates OD projects for South East Asian countries like Japan and Singapore. Her areas of interest are leadership assessment and coaching.

Introduction

Having grown up in an academic environment at home, academic perhaps was perhaps a natural progression for my career and growth. Doing research and teaching was perhaps the only way forward. A lot of it perhaps had to do being women. Women in late 1980’s perhaps thought teaching to be a great vehicle to go out and work. Teaching, as a profession was culturally the most respected profession in India. It was coveted and considered sufficient for women who intended to work for a living. Of course then a part of it has to do with the person you are and what you want to become. Decisions often required courage and risk taking which was perhaps the part of my belief systems.

Before I embark further, I don’t think I am a leader yet, to me leadership has never been a destination, it has always been a journey of "leadership" which continues. The more I know about it, the more aware I become of what I don’t know about it. Learning is one of the strengths that have seen me through my professional career; learning for me and others is now also my career.

Different Phases and Learning

I will like to describe the journey in three parts; though all three parts may not be mutually exclusive.

- Research This was an era where in had to read extensively, verify the data and make sure authentic facts that published. Looking back this was extremely instrumental in building the following qualities which came in very handy through different facets of my journey. I remember at the time doing
research when it was predominantly male dominated failed. I explicitly remember what my grandfather said at that time when I was nervous joining this as there were no women there. He said “Being a woman in man’s world you have to take make sure that you are doubly as good as any one of them, then only you will get respected as a professional”. These words have stayed with me even till this date and that is what I always wanted to "double as good”.

- **Attention to details** Research consisted of assimilating various facts and figures and then analyzing. Any small oversight could perhaps give wrong results and conclusions. Therefore one was extremely careful in drafting a research paper.

- **Resilience** Any fact or theory that we came out with, was reviewed by several referees, in the process what happened was redoing it several times. There were times when I was extremely frustrated and wanted to give it up really but held on. This really taught me a very valuable lesson that how important resilience can be while succeeding.

- **Precise communication** While we may have wonderful theory but the key lies in communicating it aptly through various research magazines. Doing great work alone was not important; if we were able to communicate the same or not was also the key. There were times when reviewer found out a mistake which could actually change the context of the whole sentence.

- **Mentors** Here was also the first time that I realized how important a role mentors do play in the organization. The whole thing to coming up with an idea to rolling it as a research project needs a lot of guidance. Some of us often wonder what an important role a mentor can play in research but here I was naive out of campus and had no idea of what research is meant to be. Initially I had joined it as it was the first thing available at that point of time but later was quite happy about the same. Mentors that I had at that point of time helped me with a valuable lesson - always endeavor to do great quality work but make sure you present it well too. This lesson stayed with me till date and I often pass it on to employees who work with me.

After I joined I had a women employee who came to me and said that she feels awkward among so many men; I think I advised her what worked for me - I told her treat them like equals and colleagues, in your mind let there be no difference and they will treat you the same way. Equal to me always meant equal - it meant I pick up my own bags and open my own door among other things. A lot of women of younger generation have told me that they felt unlimited seeing me work; to me that was highest reward.

- **Humility** When I started out for research I thought I had arrived in life getting a decent salary in a small town. I thought of myself as an "officer" already. However after joining the job I learnt that not only to type and photocopy myself, sometimes had to make my own cup of tea and for others too. Everyone was senior and more experienced; hence it took a lot of learning to be able to succeed in this field. Here everyone read reports and paper as a hobby and were extremely
knowledgeable and yet so modest. It took me a while to settle in but I knew from then that – no matter how much I know I will always need to know more. You cannot be proud ever as pride inhibits learning. This is perhaps where the seeds of servant leadership were sown. It was a lot about listening to all around and absorbing knowledge.

- **Teaching** I have been teaching not only in academics but also with corporate for a long time. Teaching has been a true passion and I think I have done it consistently for more than ten years as well. Being a woman it was almost a natural phenomenon as I mentioned it before a women is born with ‘nurturer; instincts and this field was where I could perhaps nurture pupils to my hearts content. I always had a lot to learn here not only academic skills but also how to transmit information across in a manner that it is comprehensible. This was the real key which took me years to master and I believe I am still learning. There were students who challenged and contradicted me a lot, it was from them that I learnt most valuable lessons. There were others who were as hungry as sponges, it was these who made my days worthwhile. There were others who did not want to learn and they always made me try higher. Summarizing few messages that I picked up along the way were

  - **Creativity** If anyone does the same thing the same way, that too teaching, more than the pupil, the teacher is bound to lose interest. The key was being in innovative in way we teach the subjects. It can even be few real life examples, few games and the list how to innovate is endless. The only submission here is that creativity is in the eyes of beholders, it is not what a teacher feels creative but it is perceived creative by receivers.

  - **Honesty** This may sound or feel strange around here as one of behaviors for great teachers. A great teacher is also an expert. There are times when we are in front of an audience and we may not have all the answers or we may not be sure of what answers are apt. It is one of the examples but there can be numerous.

  - **Listening** This one I learnt too late in life. As a teacher I always thought being an immaculate orator is all that it takes. I learnt too late in life that oration is a small part, real connection happens through honest real listening; there are no pretensions in listening. You just listen and listen. It not only connects everyone together but also is great learning experience.

  - **High energy** This relates to my experience as a student; how charged the atmosphere was when a teacher or faculty was absolute high energy; it was absolute great pleasure to learn from in that high energy and highly charge atmosphere.

All these messages were absolutely embedded in me as I moved forward; I realized I missed a step whenever I overlooked any one of the above.

- **People development** Perhaps this is all about developing people and as you develop them you learn along the way. The best part I learnt about this is the moment you talk to anyone about their growth, career, aspirations and development; they are so completely engaged with you. This also is the most powerful tool in retention that I have ever come across. I can talk about a lot of qualities that a great professional in
this field can have. More important than anything that I can mention here is perhaps the belief that 'development' makes the difference.

To me perhaps this was important. I honestly believed and preached how development can and learning can shape employees and what astronomical difference it can make in the careers and growth of an individual. The some factors that were instrumental is success were

- **Credibility** A personal credibility that a people development professional carries with him/her in the organization. There can be numerous factors governing this, it can be knowledge, skills, being prompt, giving attention, maintaining confidentiality etc. The obvious ones are ability to influence business and following every initiative that has been started through. This ranks highest in any leadership paradigm but here it is more than ever, as development is always important on organizational agenda but never "urgent".

- **Ability to let go** Not all development initiatives and all pathways may work for all individuals. Some of them may not be appropriate in a particular business scenario or work with a particular leader. The ability to recognize it early and make correlations mid course. It is also possible that some plans may not work for a group. It is good to continuously monitor it and let go. I have realized this that it never does any good to stick with an approach; to be open to change or let it go for better ones is the right way. To let go, to me signifies openness and continuous learning. I think here sensitivity of when not to have control and when to exert pressure.

To me the role of a people development person is a bit of a bother too. Sometimes the way we give messages to our children are subtle and sometimes we let go for them to discover and learn for themselves. I think being of fairer sex this was very natural and hence the results were also good.

- **Finisher** Often we start great things with bang but we tend to lose momentum on the way somewhere. I have been learning at all times how to a better finisher, I have not succeeded yet but I know my success lies in finishing things well and not just starting and coming up with million dollar ideas.

### Key Accomplishments and Challenges

The accomplishments to me were not in form of certificates and awards. They were more in form of gratifications. To me whenever we had initial development discussions and some one called me again to schedule another round - that was gratification and that was accomplishment to me. There were times when some one was presenting something on a subject which I had very little knowledge on but still they wanted to run it past me as it was important to them, to me that was an award. When some employees were going through a phase of self doubt and I was the first person that came to their mind that was the greatest form of recognition to me. In some ways they regarded me as a confidant and sounding board and the number of employees who did that kept on growing, that was my ultimate satisfaction.

I have seen a role like people development if not continuously improvised, constantly learnt with new techniques and methods does not lead to great results. There is a lot of feedback that comes your way by virtue of the role. How you filter and utilize the feedback is your way forward.
We women are forever guilty if we spend too much time working. I learnt a very valuable lesson here. My work enriches me, makes me grow and makes me feel happy and worthy. This growth and happiness manifests itself into a wonderful environment at home and that is always our objective. I have tried in many ways to pass on the learning to women that I develop around me. I have very rarely suffered from "guilt pangs" and ensure that women around me feel conformable as well. I also have repeatedly given message to all women colleagues that so called "glass ceiling" is in mind only; it does not really exist in good organizations.

The ability to challenge the assumptions and contradict belief system was the biggest challenge. A great development professional should be able to challenge all leaders if it is required in a constructive way. The ability to do so is what sets us apart from taking this role to new heights.

The challenge also is in creating and rewriting the role yourself. You can be a training professional or you can look beyond the world of training for people development. You have a job and you can create your role around it. To me it is important that all development for at least the talent pipeline of the organization has to be personalized. It will take effort and time but results would be very satisfying. I have honestly tried not to have one shoe fits all approach. In some areas we tried to bucket the development plans but mostly everything at that level was individualized. Development also took a lot of time and effort from line managers. Somewhere the challenge has also been to be bale to 'sell' to them that their effort will be useful not only to them but the organization as well. In some ways this was key challenge and done well it also translated into key accomplishment.

**Journey Forward and Conclusion**

It is still a long journey, there are few milestones but perhaps it is always continuing. The bar always keeps on going higher and higher. The more I discover and then I also find out how much I don't know at all. The humility in me keeps learning alive and with this learning I hope to make a difference. The encouragement I got from all managers, bosses and mentored is perhaps the result of what I am today. For me small succeeded are extremely important and that is perhaps for me to rejoice and get my motivation from. The way forward is perhaps a bit of unknown and new. The aspiration is to be the best in my field soon. While I say that I realize that is not the destination at all. It will be so important to see how development can make a significant difference to individuals and they in turn make a difference to the organization. In some ways I also feel people development is an extension of me and it is also in my DNA being a woman. I think women have an intrinsic skill of feeling themselves in other people's shoes and that really aids dialogues, coaching and mentoring. In the end my guiding principle has been

> "Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it
Boldness has genius, power, and Magic in it"

— Gothe
ALICE IN CORPORATE WONDERLAND

PRISCILLA D NELSON

Abstract

Though today there are more opportunities than ever before for women who want to move up the corporate ladder still there is a shortage when it comes to the women in top positions. This article looks at the mistakes that women often make as they make important decisions for their careers with their families and commitments on the domestic front at the back of their minds. These mistakes are correlated to some of the mistakes that Alice made in the famous nursery rhyme “Alice in Wonderland” and the mistakes that women in leadership roles make. Women have to check where they stand in their career graphs at this point of time, where they want to reach, and act quickly so that they are not left behind in this very competitive rat race.

About the author

Priscilla D Nelson is currently Assistant Vice President, Global Business Director, People Leadership and Executive Coaching, Mentoring and Development, Satyam School of Leadership, Satyam Computers. She is an MS from university of Utah, a Certified Professional Coach, listed in Who's Who in Executives & Businesses, Who's Who in Women Executives, Former President Elect: International Coach Federation, Metro DC Chapter.

Priscilla spoke at the American Society for Training and Development in Atlanta, Georgia in June on Leadership in Asia and presented the closing keynote for the American Society for Training and Development Asian Conference in Shanghai in August, for NASSCOM in December. She presents at Learning World 2008 in April and continues to receive frequent speaker invitations. She is currently writing a book entitled "The Missing Gender in Global Leadership" and a second book on Appreciative Inquiry, to be published by John Wiley and Associates.

Having been asked to write this article from a cross-cultural perspective I chose to begin by drawing an analogy between the famous nursery rhyme “Alice In Wonderland” (or a least some blend of the many versions now published) and women in leadership roles. Not everyone knows the story of Alice In Wonderland so let me begin by giving a brief overview of the story and, if you will, a few metaphors which seem appropriate.

Lewis Carroll wrote a story in 1865 about a little girl who travelled into a magic world under ground in chase of a white rabbit who she followed down a rabbit hole. She meets numerous characters in her dreams such as the Mad Hatter, the Queen of Hearts, the Mock Turtle, the Cheshire Cat and the March Hare … all guests at a fantasy tea party. Each character along the way contributes to a myriad of opportunities with complicated scenarios and outcomes. It’s a delightful children’s story and although it’s been controversial over the years, it has served as the topic of many management studies and numerous analogies have been drawn between the
misguided decisions of Alice and modern day lessons in leadership.

If we were to ask Alice as an adult with a child of her own, about the decisions she had taken in this "fantasy" story, she would most likely agree that she would have benefited from more training in problem solving. One choice she might rethink would certainly include following an unknown white rabbit down an equally unknown long dark hole.

**Lesson #1:** Following someone who cares more about "how they look" or "getting things done" rather than getting things done right, can lead you to a deep hole.

I recall when the United States was going through its struggles with equal rights and women in the workplace challenges, change didn't happen overnight. Women followed unspoken rules to get ahead, often losing an important part of themselves in the process.

Many women chose career over family, recognizing that at that time in our history, it would be challenging to have both. Our male counterparts were not responsible for raising the children or taking care of the responsibilities of the home. Their focus was on their work. Nuclear families rather than extended families, were a reality. The extended family system as it exists in India as well as other parts of Asia, allows for support to working mothers, although there are still expectations of women holding a dual role and specific expectations about what those roles look like in the family.

During this time in our history, in the U.S., as in India, women would routinely complete their educations and then when it was time for a family, leave the workforce. The introduction of programs such as "job sharing" and "maternity leave" helped significantly in bring about different options and women began realizing that despite the challenges, they could have a family and a career. Such programs are now becoming more acceptable throughout the world, as organizations face increasing challenges with knowledge worker shortages and more women coming into the workforce.

**Lesson #2: Don't follow everyone else to avoid being left out.** Minority voices often have the answer to the question which is yet to be asked.

Working outside of the home is still not a first choice for many women in India and even when it is for an individual woman, there is a lot of pressure on her not to work. It takes a lot of courage to make such a decision, and taking on a leadership position can cause even more additional stress on the couple and their families. Women must take care to have frank discussions with their intended partner before and after marriage, around how each will support the other’s goals, anticipated career objectives and potential challenges to each achieving them. As our world continues to change it is critical to embrace the values of the past while at the same time including the changes necessary for working in an increasing more globally competitive world.

Some feel that as women take on more leadership roles, the values of the family are impeded, arguments are more common and divorce rates increase ... better not to invite problems ... better to leave things as they are. It's as if a direct correlation has been proven ... as if it's the only path! Playing it safe is not the answer. Women in India tell me they feel invisible. Continually faced with the challenge of always being better than their male counterparts in order to get ahead, (a situation I found myself in countless times during my career) and even then they feel discounted ... intentionally as they are seen as a threat ... or unintentionally because they have never been taken seriously as a gender so why should people pay attention...
now. While it's hard to believe, much of this is unintentional. They have a rule in the U.S., "ignorance is no excuse". You are held responsible for knowing. Global leaders and organizations must be particularly aware of the laws of those countries in which they do business. Ignorance is no excuse! With the world growing so quickly we can't ever assume that a law of one country will never affect us in another.

**Lesson #3: If it doesn't matter where you are going it doesn't matter where you end up.**

Great wisdom from the Cheshire Cat from the Alice In Wonderland story. It's important to be clear about your goals. In India decisions are often made by parents. This platform extends to anyone in a position of authority, teachers, employers, etc. Women who don't claim the right to move up on the organization, who don't network for the opportunities in other positions will no doubt lose those positions to women from other cultures who do wish to hold them. Being shy will cause you to lose the race. The question begs to be asked, "What would success look like for you?" Will it allow you the opportunity to use your strengths? Will it provide challenges and successes? Who will mentor you? Are you in an organization that fosters the development of women in leadership positions or will you be alone in this quest? If you will be alone, what support systems can you count on? Will taking this job position you for where you wish to be in one year, three years or five years? And, equally as important, who are you mentoring and coaching?

**Lesson #4: Before you decide where you are going, you first have to decide where you are right now.**

Too often we don't take stock of where we are. I coach executives all over the world and as such some of the individuals I work with are women in senior global leadership positions. This involves asking the right questions to assist the leader in gaining clarity around where they see themselves if perceived as star performers. Once they get a clear picture of what that looks like they can compare where they are now and prepare an action plan for reaching this goal.

In summary, women are faced with wonderful opportunities never before imagined for them in India. Along with these opportunities however comes the challenge of deciding what they want and claiming a place in the race! The knowledge worker gap (an acute shortage of well-trained and educated workers in our world) makes it possible for women all over the world to bring balance to organizations. Organizations that are well-balanced in terms of gender are proven more successful.

**Family dynamics will require conversations around how the family will be structured.** New roles and different kinds of support may be needed. Women who don't choose quickly will be left behind. Women who don't take advantage of mentors, coaches and networking will most likely grow slower than with them.
TO PLAN AND MANAGE ONE’S CAREER

RANJINI RANGANATH

Abstract

The article highlights all the opportunities that await the woman of today because her abilities and strengths have been recognized. However women are still not utilizing the opportunities that are coming their way. The article clearly points out some of the mistakes that women make at their work place. A number of suggestions have been listed that will help a woman become more confident and also perform better at work. Women are encouraged to take the risk and boldly display their hidden talent. The article gives a lot of relevant tips for today’s working women. It is not enough to sit and wait for something to happen and hope it will be a bed of roses soon, instead the women have to stand up and fight her battle to make her way to the top.

About the author

Ranjini Ranganath is Senior Managing Director, Global Development Centre, Cisco Systems. She is the executive sponsor for Cisco’s Womens’ Action Network and has been a thought leader and supporter of diversity initiatives as a means to driving organizational change.

Corporate India is ready to attract, reward and retain women like never before. HR professionals will talk of increasing the talent pool, but there is more.

Women have more purchasing power than ever before, as workers, home makers and entrepreneurs. Shareholders now know that companies run by diverse boards with many women are performing better than all-male ones with similar ideas and prejudices.

With flattening, global organizations, a new breed of leaders will replace the command and control ones. They will bring people together to collaborate and create. Their power will lie in influence rather than direct authority. They will replace politburo style centralised decision making with empowered, speedy, local decision making. Most women are naturals at this style of leadership. They learn early, how to bring the family together and exercise influence over patriarchs.

Women haven’t realized just how important they are becoming at the workplace. I have observed women sit quietly at meetings, while a male peer holds forth with authority, using the ideas and all that they’ve learned from the woman.

Women I know haven’t applied for bigger roles because of the few competencies they lack. Their male peers apply confidently, based on the few things they can do, ignoring what they lack.

To my women readers - first, pop a confidence pill. Recognise your capability. You represent the breed of new consumers and collaborators your organization needs, whether they know it or not. Take on bigger responsibility based on your potential, not just what you can do today.
Encourage yourself to take risks. What's the worst that can happen? If you can force yourself to speak up at that meeting once, you'll do it again and again.

Perform, perform, perform. You have half the time to learn and have to be twice as good at your work before you're considered equal. That's reality.

Take responsibility for the choices you make. Some women expect to take career breaks, work only nine to five and still get a promotion before the guy who's been performing round the clock.

Finally, if you see yourself as a victim that's exactly what you will be. Glass ceiling, prejudice, old boys networks, career breaks, weak personal branding are all real. The trick to success is, do you see these as challenges you are going to overcome, or as an insurmountable mountain that it is someone else’s job to get out of your way?

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DISCOVERING SELF POTENTIAL
MEGHNA BIJLANI

Abstract
The author suggests to women to introspect the innate hidden strengths. A sojourn steeped with pitfalls of biased tendencies and discouraging attitudes, certainly not an easy journey, but for the inner strength, grit and determination, she walked to the finish line with her head held high. The power of the fairer mind has crossed boundaries and chartered a path of unprecedented growth paving opportunities galore ... the journey of women.

About the author
A graduate in Eco (Hons) from Lady Sriram College, and Post Graduate in Human Resource Management, currently working as a Consultant with Right Grow Talent.

You may be an ordinary woman caught in the daily routine of life comprising numerous tasks that have now come to define you as an individual. Admirst this you rarely have a chance to sit back and introspect "Who am I and What do I want to become?"

Do you just feel that you have succumbed to pressures of life and forgotten your actual self? If your answer to the above question is yes, then its time that you sit back and reflect...

Entering an Unknown Domain
Entering an unknown domain and walking on the professional platform is the woman of today who has defined herself as the new avatar with a vision and perception overtaking the best, reaching unscaled heights, and being a subject of envy and awe amongst the many. A sojourn steeped with pitfalls of biased tendencies and discouraging attitudes, certainly not an easy journey, but for the inner strength, grit and determination, she walked to the finish line with her head held high. The power of the fairer mind has crossed boundaries and chartered a path of unprecedented growth paving opportunities galore. The prime challenges have been recognition in terms of acceptability, equality, intelligence and need to bring about changes. Thus she sets the example for others to follow.

The Role of a Woman in Our Society is Multifold as she discharges her obligation from being a dutiful daughter, wife, mother and home maker all packaged into one individual. The age-old tradition and practices still continue as we 'yell' for gender equality.

You may be an ordinary woman caught in the daily routine of life comprising of numerous tasks that have now come to define you as an individual. Amidst this you rarely have a chance to sit back and introspect "Who am I and What do I want to become?"
Are you one of those people for whom others used to comment "She has great potential and is going to reach places"? Were you the class topper, ace singer or the most sought after actress? Are you now thinking that what you are currently doing is way different from what you actually wanted to do? Why didn't you pursue your dreams? Do you still have that inherent desire to follow your dreams or perhaps you don’t care? Maybe you think that reality was different than what you thought and perhaps dismissed your dreams as being impractical?

Arthur Schopenhauer says it best, 'We forfeit three-fourths of ourselves in order to be like other people.' Do you just feel that you have succumbed to pressures of life and forgotten your actual self?

If your answer to the above question is yes, then its time that you sit back and reflect. Each individual is distinct from the other and has a separate identity. This identity is called "Self". Similarly each one of us has a unique gift or value proposition. This is known as "Potential". At this point, it might be useful for me to state that all of us have a lot of potential which is unrealized and waiting to be nurtured. When we talk of discovering true potential, we talk about aspects that are within us, but have not been fully realized or recognized. How many times have you accomplished a task and exclaimed "How did I do this? I did not know I was capable of doing this." More often than not, we define boundaries for ourselves and believe that we cannot go beyond them. This perception of our own self is what prevents us in this discovery towards our true potential.

Discovering self potential is a continuous process of evaluation of our capabilities, analyzing our reactions under varying circumstances, understanding the effect and changes we thus bring about in our environment, and assessing the cumulative impact it has on our future prospects of growth.

We are not alone in this journey of discovery. While we have learnt, we have observed, we have read and we have experienced not only ourselves but others too. Somewhere along the path, we have identified ourselves, and have seen our reflection in another, as well as some time have been impressed by someone else and secretly desired to emulate those qualities in our own selves. There have been times when we have imagined ourselves in a particular situation and reacted in our minds, and gauged ourselves. We have travelled, we have spoken and we have heard. Our interaction with humanity is what makes us know more as to what we are, how we are and what we can do.

**How Do We Realize Our Potential?**

Now the question arises how do we realize our potential? Many a time, most women are bogged down by fear of failure and hence inhibit themselves. We are talking about a woman grown up in an atmosphere under the shadow of parental umbrella, social values, influences of friends and peers and as well her own contribution of understanding of goals. Traversing the path of life, perhaps, the most significant aspect of a woman is the change in thinking, attitude and reactions to the particular environment amongst people and circumstances. Under these conditions to sustain and survive, to stabilize and focus on what needs to be achieved by us, to control our own lives, we would need a greater understanding of our own self first and determine what we can do. However, discovering one's true potential is a process that is easier said than done and may even take a lifetime. The task of ensuring that we do not lose our identity due to various influences, is in itself a mammoth one. But the very process is an enriching
experience. Every small step that we take brings us closer to realizing our true self.

The secret of discovering one's true potential lies in realizing the fact that you were created to be you and not anyone else. Each individual has tremendous potential and is capable of accomplishing tasks that she often thought of as impossible. We often admire other people for who they are. They may be anyone from a famous tennis player to a social activist or a math genius. We admire them because these people have realized what they were best at, gone ahead to pursue the same and achieved excellence. Hence if you find your own unique talent then you will be admired for who you are.

This does not mean that you stop having role models in life. It is important that you have them since they would help you draw inspiration to discover your potential. The problem arises when you stop learning from them in order to become a better individual.

Potential is linked to purpose

It becomes easier to discover to your potential when potential is linked to purpose. If you have clarity on your purpose then you will realize that you have the potential to achieve that purpose. American Essayist and Psychologist, Og Mandino has aptly stated "I am here for a purpose and that purpose is to grow into a mountain, not to shrink to a grain of sand. Henceforth will I apply ALL my efforts to become the highest mountain of all and I will strain my potential until it cries for mercy."

The best place to start is with your inner self. Having conversations with self is the most enriching experience and though you may not find all the answers, you may at least be happy with the fact that you are on the road to discovery. Your purpose may not be linked to what you are doing currently.

At the onset, it is important to have belief in ourselves, the confidence that we can do something, and as over a period of time introspect on the assignments that we have handled, the challenges that we have faced, and the results that we have achieved. The degree of achievement determines our capability. The task, however, does not end here. Capabilities also need to be enhanced. The will to perform is the catalytic ingredient. Augmenting it provides the opportunity of increasing our potential and graduating from a micro to a macro level. The more exposure one gets, the more the skills sharpen.

As one’s capabilities are honed, and the awareness and the desire to achieve increases, it would be worthwhile to review our actions from time to time and become judgemental whether it was appropriate and what could have been the outcome had one responded differently. Would the outcome have been more satisfactory? Such analysis would definitely be essential in case of errors, leading to improvement in the quality of output of an individual. It would also lead to overcoming of the weaknesses and the shortcomings in an individual, and strengthen the perception of one’s goals.

Most important, in all of the above is the honesty and sincerity one needs to exercise while conducting the self analysis, totally shedding of any make believe. Being one’s own subject, would require a certain amount of restraint not to be awed or misled by any remarks or comments which sound good to the ears but are factually inapplicable in so far as the person is concerned. The accuracy of one’s assessment depends on what one knows of self and not what others think the person is.

While we are looking within ourselves, it may also need to be remembered that
others are looking at us too. Living in a society, in order to further discovering ourselves, it is necessary to observe how others respond and how we interact. A woman reflects her image to the world by her character, by the words she speaks, by the manner in which she deals, responds or retaliate, and thus earn a reputation. In fact, our efforts and ability to merge into the mainstream also enables us to know more of our potential.

The backbone of discovering self potential is our attitude. The attitude of a person defines his/her perceptions and in the scenario of changes that take place in our lives. Our attitude is subject to many external forces. While we strive to build our credibility, many a times we run across seemingly insurmountable hurdles which we must circumvent in order to reach our goals. Under these circumstances when the flavour of defeat hangs close to ones senses, it's our attitude which governs our decision. Letting the situation to be as it is leads us to lose in our endeavours, whereas, our efforts to go ahead would lead us to further adding a notch of our capabilities. A positive attitude is therefore a must.

Attitude is not alien. It resides in us, stems from our mind and is formed by our thoughts. It is really upto us to decide the direction. Further, it may be mentioned that our attitude is also reflected by our efforts. Our efforts determine the consequences, and consequences determine the result, which is ultimately what we evaluate.

Another litmus test of our efforts is our approach. Approach is the method or the manner which the individual adopts in responding to everyday life situations for solving a problem or attaining a result, or reaching a goal. This is also the most variable of all aspects and largely depends on ones experience while confronting situations in our homes, social and professional environment, as well as our understanding of the same. The effectiveness of our approach in turn gives us a revelation of our own selves.

We live in an era of rapid growth where the fast pace of developments provide us with many opportunities to further our careers. Women have gradually reached a stage where they understand themselves better and search for challenges. We now yearn to stretch our abilities and prove our mettle. We launch our goals and ambitions, lay down our priorities, and fulfill our desires. Endowed with an intellect we disseminate, extract, absorb, and reject information and what we perceive, and move forward to another destination discovering yet some more about ourselves. This essentially means that our unique talent also becomes a source a competitive advantage. Organizations also have now come to recognize women who are able to identify and leverage their potential and use the same as a source of gaining an edge over the competition.

**The Grow Model**

The essence of The Grow Model is that every individual has enormous amount of potential which is unrealized. This means...
that the capacity of a person is much more than his/her demonstrated competencies. The capacity of a person is a summation of his/her demonstrated competencies and unrealized potential. Competencies are the skills, knowledge, and personal attributes demonstrated by individuals on the job. They can be seen and felt in demonstrated behavior. However, in each individual, there is great unrealized potential, which when identified early, can be harnessed to leverage the potential. The diagram given below illustrates this concept:

The capacity model operates on the fundamental belief that every individual possesses potential much beyond the demonstrated skills. There are four capacities which are:

- Capacity to Learn
- Capacity to Think
- Capacity to Relate
- Capacity to Act

These capacities serve to be a unique method of identifying the inherent talent of a person. This also essentially means that each individual is capable of doing much beyond that what he/she thinks is capable of.

Having said all this, I would urge all women to take those small steps that would lead them towards discovering their true potential. Even though the journey might be uncomfortable, one might falter, there will be a point when one would find answers to one's questions ... The answers lie within ourselves ... It’s upto us to search and pay attention ...

"If a woman is sufficiently ambitious, determined and gifted - there is practically nothing she can’t do" - Helen Lawrenson
WOMEN LEADERS — BUILD YOUR CREDIBILITY

RESHMI PAUL and JULIE WOLF

Abstract

Successful executive women authentically lead big and bold changes, pushing the envelope of institutional norms with power and credibility. They not only shape the culture, but broaden the strength and capability of the organization itself by creating a diversity of leadership.

The Authentic Leader Model can open non-judgmental dialogue that was previously taboo for the female executive, her mentor, her boss or even her industry. Use of this tool to map a woman’s experience opens doors to personal and organizational success and taps into vital underutilized human resources.

About the authors

Dr. Reshmi Paul is a consultant with RHR International. Earlier she spent a decade at the Monitor Group. Reshmi Paul, is a Master of Science in Economics from the London School of Economics; and an MBA from INSEAD in Fontainebleau, France. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Adelphi University in New York. Her research was in the area of emotional intelligence, interpersonal problem solving, creativity, multi-tasking and success factors of professional women.

Dr. Julie Wolf is an M.D. of RHR International Company. Julie Wolf also co-leads RHR International’s Executive Women Leader Initiative. She was a Harvard University Clinical Psychology Fellow at Massachusetts General Hospital, earned master’s and doctorate degrees in Clinical Psychology from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

A board member of a major building materials company was explaining to a networking partner the difficulties the company was having in retaining women in senior level positions. His colleague, a senior vice president of marketing and the highest ranking woman in her firm, acknowledged that it was a complex situation. When asked to share her views on executive women’s leadership, she thought for a moment and then explained, "For me, it comes down to authenticity - when I can bring my values, beliefs and full self as a woman to how I operate as a leader. It’s a combination of what I draw from within myself and what I extract from my firm to make my experience as a leader personally fulfilling as well as having a positive impact on the company."

Authenticity Matters Most

When a woman is operating at her most authentic self, she simultaneously feels and is viewed as being a more effective leader.
She is a catalyst for meaningful and positive change; a high-performing, confident individual; and a critical player in the organization's overall success. In a recent study of highly accomplished women conducted by RHR International, authenticity was consistently cited as making the greatest positive difference in accelerating and cascading the achievements of the female leader and her organization.

This finding, along with other results of the study, were used to formulate The Authentic Leader Model - a tool that shows how the dimensions of an individual woman leader’s psychology and her professional and personal environment can work together to create leadership excellence. The model is designed to describe the experience from the female executive's point of view so that boards and CEOs can gain insights which allow them to retain this critical talent pool. It highlights the strengths that both the individual woman leader and the organization can deploy to bring more diverse and effective leadership into the C-Suite.

**The Authentic Leader Model**

The Authentic Leader Model was developed to articulate and clarify the intersections between the woman as an individual and her uniquely-experienced environmental and organizational influences. It describes how women use their individual resources to navigate the forces in and outside of work, and how individual authenticity amplifies success for female executives. The model is made up of five forces which can create or detract from a woman's leadership success:

- Women Leader Climate
- Individual Psychology and Interpersonal Resources
- Leader Expectations
- External Commitments
- The Sphere of Authenticity

**Women Leader Climate**

Every female executive operates within the women leader climate. This environment consists of the dominant culture and receptivity to women in leadership positions. What are the norms of the organization and how do beliefs about women align with these norms? How are women viewed regardless of role? The answers form the "backdrop" against which all the dimensions of a woman’s individual, professional and personal attributes play out. Women leaders need to acknowledge and be aware of the climate in order to navigate it, progress within it, and ultimately shape it.

Women frequently indicate that they shy away from the limelight while working in environments that are not overtly friendly to female leaders. They hesitate to be the first to define the parameters for that organization. They report a lower tolerance for mistakes made by female leaders. "I feel like a rock star, everything I do is watched," said one female general counsel.

A lukewarm women leader climate can also inhibit the supportive and mentoring behavior of men. They can be reluctant for reasons that include: being afraid that honest feedback will hurt women's feelings, they don't know how women will take feedback, and even fear of creating an "HR issue."

Sophisticated organizations understand that it is a business imperative to positively impact the women leader climate. While there is no cookie cutter solution that will enhance every situation and help advance every woman leader, programs such as succession planning reviews that create intentional and systematic culture change can increase the presence and impact of women at the top. A critical component is a tailored
approach that aims to understand and advance the woman as an individual and as a leader.

Individual Psychology and Interpersonal Resources

For executive women, individual psychological resources are typically the most developed and powerful assets at their disposal. They consist of her emotional, cognitive and motivational traits, as well as the skills, knowledge and experience that she brings to bear on the position. However, they may also include female attributes such as emotional intelligence, an ability to be highly collaborative, and the strengths derived from managing complex, co-existing identities of executive, partner, mother and daughter.

“A lot of women tend to be more tentative about who they are at work and end up acting a little out of character,” said one senior vice president of a major corporation. “I was lucky enough to be in an environment where I was given the license to be who I was and so I used it. For example, I can be as direct as the best of them, but I am also able to quickly get a sense of the people I’m dealing with. I listen actively and get into their space quickly, and I think that is because of my gender.”

A successful woman leader also has a complex set of systems support created by both her and the organization - her interpersonal resources. These are important relationships that she brings to the position: champions, mentors, informal networks, women networks, and supportive partners and husbands.

A highly successful managing director in an investment bank, Tonya decided to move from marketing to institutional sales. This was a risky move because she was established and doing very well in her current position. But she reasoned that the power and money were in sales, and if she could be productive, she would be objectively compensated. Tonya’s boss became a pivotal mentor; he gave her selling tactics, advocated for her, and paired her with the most experienced trader on the floor.

Tonya’s drive and willingness to take this risk, combined with her boss’s coaching and his — and by extension her — interpersonal resources, accelerated her success.

The executive woman’s individual psychology and her interpersonal resources are at the core of the Authentic Leader Model. They are the reservoir of capabilities she accesses to interact with her environment and from which authenticity can grow.

Leader Expectations

Leader expectations are the organization’s tacit ideas of what people in leadership positions should look like. It is a composite of style, experience, skills and even personal appearance. Depending on the industry, function, company or culture, the leader expectations may not even include a female component. However, gender discerning leader expectations can interact with authenticity to create a surprising, powerfully positive leadership experience.

Allison was looking for a new opportunity in her manufacturing company when her boss made a request. A well-respected executive in one of the most industrial, male-dominated units of the business had recently died. Could Allison take his place? After discussing it with her boss and mentor at length, she agreed. Spending a large amount of time “on the line” with her male subordinates, Allison learned the business quickly. She helped the unit recover from the loss of its former leader and brought innovations to the firm. Her success in this role earned another promotion. While proud of her business accomplishments, one of the most
meaningful events of the assignment was a farewell-note from a male subordinate who acknowledged how her contributions and leadership had won him over.

Allison embraced this opportunity from the authentic part of herself. This was recognized initially by her boss and then her subordinates. It helped to accelerate her success in the position. But, in addition, she also changed the leader expectations within that business unit. In the future, it is unlikely that any employee there will question whether a woman, per se, is right for the job.

External Commitments

External commitments are the impact of outside activities on a woman’s leadership abilities and her capacity to contribute to the organization. The woman executive can experience individual gains or losses from involvement in activities or responsibilities outside of work: caring for children or elders, involvement in charitable organizations or social groups, and membership on boards. External commitments are important forces acting on the experience of the executive woman because these responsibilities tend be more expected of and/or more cherished intrinsically by women than men.

When examining the influence of external commitments on the woman’s leadership capabilities, it is essential to consciously throw away assumptions and stereotypes. More responsibilities outside of work don’t always lead to a desire for fewer duties within the professional sphere. Many women indicate that as their personal lives and external commitments became more robust, so did their career. Often, these forces played off one another in a positive and fruitful way.

Although external commitments are often seen by organizations as competition for a woman’s attention, intellect and emotional energy, they can be used strategically to strengthen her abilities. Opportunities to develop leadership skills may arise more quickly through charitable work or professional associations. Giving time to women to participate in these activities, as well as being respectful of more personal responsibilities, builds loyalty to the organization and strongly reinforces authenticity.

The Sphere of Authenticity

Women make it into the C-level suite for many of the same reasons men do: talent, performance, skill sets and some amount of luck. However, being authentic is essential for optimizing a woman’s ability as a senior executive. The larger this sphere of authenticity - the more broadly it grows from her individual psychological and interpersonal resources and spreads across the leadership expectations and external commitments - the greater the potential for leadership impact. A hospitable women leader climate enhances the potential for a positive interaction between these individual resources and the external forces, leading to high levels of job satisfaction.

The key to gaining alignment among the elements of the Authentic Leader Model is to address the internal experience created by the confluence of environmental forces and the attributes of the individual executive woman.

During a period in her career, Suzanne became the dean of a U.S. service academy. At this time, hazing was a common practice for first-year cadets. To Suzanne, this demeaning behavior was contrary to her strong value of respect for others. She believed that if these budding officers engaged in and were subjected to this belittling behavior, they would fail to become successful leaders.

Instead of rushing to change this long-held tradition as soon as she took office, Suzanne
observed, collected data, prepared a brief and ran it by several trusted advisors before proposing eradication of the practice. Ultimately, she pushed through this very unpopular change and made a fundamental, positive cultural impact on the academy.

Suzanne demonstrated the power of fully embraced authenticity. The successful interaction of her individual resources (i.e., courage, perceptiveness to organizational norms, influencing capabilities, mentor influences) with the leader expectations enabled her to create a policy revision. In addition, the power of the change was amplified by her authentic leadership.

In the short term, it is easier, quicker, cheaper and more immediately gratifying to the organization if the woman adapts or if there is a “quick fix.” But in the long run, it is forward thinking, transformational and beneficial to the enterprise if both the woman and the organization assess and adapt to the complexity involved in promoting executive women leadership.

Catalyst for Change: Finding Authenticity

Successful executive women authentically lead big, bold change, pushing the envelope of institutional norms with power and credibility. They not only shape the culture, but broaden the strength and capability of the organization itself by creating a diversity of leadership.

The Authentic Leader Model can open non-judgmental dialogue that was previously taboo for the female executive, her mentor, her boss or even her industry. Use of this tool to map a woman’s experience opens doors to personal and organizational success and taps into vital underutilized human resources.

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COMPASSION OR AGGRESSION — WHAT GETS RESULTS?

RETHA ELS

Abstract

We have given the young female executive a dual message in terms of what is necessary to succeed in business. On the one hand she is being advised to be strong, powerful and in control (typical masculine business mindset) and on the other, she’s being told to be co-operative, relating and caring (feminine business mindset).

This article reflects on the possibility that we need both and that we can transcend duality by creating a more integrated, holistic business mindset to focus on the acceptability, purpose and structure of the underlying concepts of these opposites.

About the author

Retha Els is a registered psychologist and lifestyle coach who specialises in people- and organizational development and change management. She consults on various large and complex organizational transformation projects in mainly the manufacturing and mining sectors. She is a Masters in Psychology, Masters in Business Administration, B Phil (cum laude), ACMC (Meta coaching); Master Practitioner (NS-NLP) Certificate holder in Group Processes Facilitation.

Introduction

In today’s business world women still encounter obstacles such as glass ceilings, prejudice, unequal pay, discrimination, only having perceived inferior positions available to them and encountering resistance to women’s leadership positions, to mention but a few.

The Masculine Mindset

In the past these obstacles have often been dealt with through a paradigm that advised the young female executive to be strong and powerful in order to deal with challenges and to succeed in the business world. We talk about, for example, "standing in your power", or "empower yourself" or "be a force to be reckoned with". These phrases emphasize individualism, self-reliance, visibility, resilience, emotional control and belief in one’s own abilities (self-directed), as well as the ability to compete, to take charge, to make things happen, to influence behaviour and to overcome resistance (others directed). These characteristics were traditionally associated with the masculine and they have served us well within the business environment.

The Feminine Mindset

At exactly the same time that we are teaching our young female executives to "succeed as men" in the business world, we also advocate that a more feminine mindset is needed to succeed in business. We use change in the business environment as the raison d’être.
This business environment is globally competitive, it recognises the value of non-tangible assets such as information and social networks and it is moving towards a service and knowledge-based economy within a social-environmentally responsible framework. We promulgate that the traditional feminine qualities such as relating to others and building a network of relationships characterised by caring, sharing and cooperating, nurturing talent, collaborating team-work, supporting and connecting to others, enabling and celebrating others' goal achievements and mediating conflicting needs, are requirements to respond effectively to this business environment.

Interestingly enough we said the same thing about the demands of the business environment in the early nineties through, for example, the voices of Peter Senge and Peter Drucker. And that was in a time before internet, multi-national corporations, real-time global communication and Al Gore's "an inconvenient truth".

These skills are serving us just as well as the previous frame of reference on what is needed to succeed in business, regardless of whether the business environment has changed or not.

**What Mindset Do We Need?**

If we look at the messages conveyed through our business mindsets of what is required for success, it is fair to say that we are giving a dual message to the young female executives, leaving them confused and undecided. The underlying assumption in that assertion is that there is a single answer, an "either-or", an ending solution and that we need to choose one business mindset in order to be successful as leaders. An assumption that we cannot effectively work from both mindsets at the same time since they differ fundamentally too much.

Yet, at the same time, it raises a fundamental question; can these perceived polarities (masculine vs. feminine business mindsets) be valid at exactly the same time in exactly the same business environment and possibly in the same organization and/or the same person?

Currently we have organizations that have successfully incorporated the "feminine" mindset in their traditional "masculine" businesses. We can use them as role models to see how they are creating networks through centres of excellence, by instantly sharing information and knowledge across the entire organization, by using technology such as "Sharepoint", by getting functional interest groups supporting each other in solving problems in real time across geographical boundaries, by running coaching and mentoring programmes for accelerated talent development and by giving training in various relating skills such as networking, communication and emotional intelligence. Interestingly enough, very often, at the same time, these organizations can also be used as role models in how they reward self-reliance and confidence and hail the decisive "rainmakers" that can make things happen and/or influence behaviour without necessarily involving team members in decision making. In answer to this question - yes, both mindsets drive behaviour at exactly the same time - they are not mutually exclusive.

The next question is then — can we transcend the concept of polarities and find a completely new business mindset?

Throughout the ages philosophers and spiritual leaders have considered polarities as necessary for the growth of the individual and as such, the growth of humankind.

One of the principles when looking at polarities is to realise that they cannot exist
independently. In the words of Jung; "... between all opposites there is such a close bond that one cannot be thought of without its corresponding negation. They belong together as correspondences, which is not to say that the one is derivable from the other, but that they subsist side by side as psychic energy" (paragraph 406). One cannot grasp the concept of light if one did not have the benefit of darkness to compare it to. In the same way one cannot understand self-reliance without knowing what mutual dependency is. There is no moral significance attached to either. For example; which one is good, light or darkness? Neither light nor darkness is inherently good or bad. Both achieve moral significance only once we attach some judgment based on our internal frames of reference and our expectations to them, such as; darkness is associated with crime or light is associated with purity. Neither crime nor purity has any bearing on the nature of light or darkness, except in our association of it.

In contemplating the masculine and the feminine business mindsets we can choose to see one or the other as good or as bad. Once we have made a value judgment about them, our minds will find evidence to support our judgment. The more conscious mind however, will know that the side we choose to evaluate as good (or bad) is only good (or bad) in our minds based on what we choose to focus on. We have the power to change our focus, at any time we choose to do so.

Jung can also be quoted to illustrate the second principle of polarities: “True opposites are never incommensurables; if they were, they could never unite … they do show a constant propensity to union … [since] … they are the extreme qualities in any state, by virtue of which that state is perceived to be real” (paragraph 407). In other words, they only represent the extremes of a range of possibilities, which immediately challenges the either/or single solution, and open the limitless potential of a new solution somewhere in that range of possibilities. Then we can manage the polarity by accepting that there is no single solution and that we have more than one option - a "both/and"-dilemma that is ever-present.

It is most likely that if we want to transcend the masculine-feminine mindset polarity to establish a completely new business mindset, we might want to start by identifying the common denominator for the two extremes. In Jung’s words: “what is the state that the two extreme qualities represent”? The third principle of polarities is that it creates a dynamic tension flowing between these opposites. A tension that is needed for growth in human consciousness and self-actualisation. More often than not we find ourselves attracted to both sides of the polarity. When we move to one side we fall under the influence of that side. For example; we might work very hard and be effective in an individual, self-reliance way for some period of time when something changes. It could be a slight shift in the environment. Then self-reliance may not be a good strategy and we need to move to the opposite, being mutual-dependency. When we move to a mode of mutual-dependency, we have to recognise that we will automatically bring some of the self-reliance characteristics to this side of the polarity. Thus, we can oscillate between the two opposites until enough of the lesser preferred opposite becomes consciously more acceptable as part of our identity. For example; if I see myself as more self-reliant, but I spend enough time in a mutually-dependent relationship, the way in which I see myself can change and mutual-dependency may become more acceptable and even become part of who I am and how I function. Integration can then occur. It is then that we realise that the concept of
mutual-dependency and self-reliance can comfortably exist at exactly the same time. I choose where and when I want to position myself in relation to the other which is the underlying concept supporting both opposites.

Unique expectations and value systems can cause us to get stuck in one pole of the polarity. It is then that we develop a one-sided awareness, ignoring the rich complexity existing between the opposites. Such a limiting mindset is characterised by selective attention to evidence supporting a belief system. A belief system is based on our evaluation of reality and does not necessarily reflect reality. The map (how we represent reality in our minds) is not the territory (reality as it is). Our belief systems are maintained by what we project onto others and by how we filter information we receive from others. If we do not recognise that we are cruel and kind, strong and vulnerable, ethical and unethical at exactly the same moment, we project the side of the polarity that we judge as bad, onto others. In our minds the other person is cruel or unethical and we are kind and ethical. In that way we never have to face our own shadow sides i.e. being cruel and unethical.

The same applies to living within either the masculine or feminine business mindset - when we favour the one, we inherently deny the other (the shadow-side). It is then when negative energy of that side come back to haunt us.

It is clear to me that we can transcend the concept of polarities and find a completely new business mindset based on four conditions;

- We stop waging war on reality;
- We take ownership of all the projections we make;
- We realise that no one can put limitations on us without our permission, and;
- We replace our “either/or” mindset with a “both/and” mindset.

Neither mindsets will fulfill the needs of the future young female leader who finds herself faced with an inner drive to add value, to realise her potential and to assimilate her unconsciousness into an integrated, emotionally mature personality. She will need to learn how to transcend these polarities by managing them. Only then will she be able to find her own north star in dealing with the complex demands in business and by implication, in her personal life too.

– Currently different methodologies exist to deal with polarities. Examples include the work of Byron Katie ("find three examples of how the opposite is also true"), Barry Johnson’s 5 step process to deal with polarities, and the work of Dr Demartini - all readily accessible on the internet.

Source: On the Nature of the Psyche; C. G. Jung (1960)
WHEN WOMEN LEAD, BALANCE SHEET SHOWS!

LINA NANGALIA

Abstract

Studies all over the world say that women are dramatically underrepresented in formal leadership positions across organizations. The women in the new millennium still need to establish their position in the corporate world. Their strengths have often been undervalued and less rewarded especially when compared to their male counterparts. What prevents women from making it to the top positions in corporations as they aspire to reinvent themselves in leadership positions? Some of the barriers include being “stereotyped”, being confronted by the ‘glass ceiling’ and measuring women’s leadership effectiveness on traditional masculine measures.

About the author

Lina Nangalia is Head-Learning and Development for Raymond Ltd. She has a Masters in Training and Development from Griffith University, Australia and has over 19 years of experience in technical training, management training and business systems. Her research interests include women in leadership and organizational culture transformation. Before joining Raymond, she worked as a consultant trainer specializing in Business communication skills and has worked extensively with several multinational companies and professionals from across the globe.

Organizations find it difficult to justify the financial and strategic investment required for recruiting, supporting and retaining female talent at the top as they function on preconceived notions and barriers. Women reinforce these stereotypes by shying away from challenging assignments under the guise of family. Some of the ways to overcome these barriers is breaking the stereotypes through significant general management experience or line-expertise, being performance driven, building critical business alliances and using language that connects. This will work provided there is a strong individual agency on the part of the woman to want to be and succeed as leader. There are advantages to having women in leadership positions. A Catalyst study found that companies with the highest representation of women in their top management teams achieved better financial performance than companies with the lowest representation of women.

Barriers Faced by Women Leaders

Given that women leaders have the potential for leadership and positively impact the bottom line, organizations need to recognize and work on overcoming the following barriers.

Stereotyping: The single most important barrier is the stereotyping of women’s roles and abilities in an organization. The belief is that women are best suited for certain roles. Unfortunately, leadership doesn’t figure on that list. Organizations operate
with the phenomenon 'Women, take care' and 'Men, take charge' (Catalyst, 2005). Since men far outnumber women in top management positions, this male-held stereotype dominates current corporate thinking. Women have been long associated with 'soft skills' like supporting and caring which are often seen as a 'not so important' trait in leadership.

Even if a woman leader takes on a gender-neutral view in an organization, chances are that the people around her probably will not. If she leads in exactly the same way as her male colleagues, her leadership may still produce different results. This could be because people react based on their own perceptions, and these perceptions are often embedded in gender stereotypes. There have been many theories on whether women use a different approach to leadership or have different leadership styles as compared to their men counterparts.

For instance, Catalyst (2005) reported that an analysis of 40 studies found very little difference between men's and women's leadership styles. However, the bigger issue is the fact that we even ask such questions about women leaders at all. It reveals one of the central leadership challenges for women: People around them often treat women leaders differently because of gender stereotypes. Though positive headlines state how women have made it to the top positions of companies, they are still an indication that women leaders are given a different kind of scrutiny.

**Glass-ceiling:** Evidence suggests that while women are typically confronted by the 'glass ceiling' which is an unacknowledged discriminatory barrier that prevents women from rising to positions of power or responsibility within a corporation, men (particularly those in female-dominated professions) are more likely to be conveyed into management positions by means of a 'glass escalator'. A major sign of the effect of the glass ceiling is gender biased compensation. Countless studies and anecdotal reports have shown huge discrepancies in salary in favor of men, even for similar positions in similar organizations. Furthermore, attitudes within the workplace suggest that workers prefer male supervisors to female ones and that many men and male managers remain unconvinced about the effectiveness of women leaders. These attitudes derive from, and contribute to, what is referred to as a 'think manager, think male' bias (Boucher & Gardner, 1999).

**Measured as per Masculine Traits:** As far as leadership in an organization is concerned, the evaluation to assess the effectiveness of leadership of men and women, is done based on 2 sets of parameters - one which is deemed by the organization as important and the other as not important (Boucher & Gardner, 1999). The 'important' set of parameters include being objective, authoritarian and detached whereas the 'unimportant' set includes being subjective, nurturing and involved. Interestingly, organizations see men exhibiting the traits that are classified as being important and women exhibiting the unimportant ones. It can safely be said here that leadership in organizations is therefore measured by masculine traits. Research also suggests that, once women attain these leadership roles, their performance is often placed under close scrutiny and their evaluation is not always positive. While research suggests that women tend to receive positive evaluations when their leadership roles are defined in feminine terms, on traditional, masculine measures of leadership, women's leadership effectiveness is often perceived to be lower than that of men.

**Personal Commitments:** Since women are typically the chief caretakers of their...
families, their children and the elderly, organizations often wonder whether a woman leader will be available to do a job without being distracted by family problems and responsibilities. In addition, it has also been seen that women tend to put profession as second-in-line to their personal lives when it comes to commitment. In such a scenario, it is family challenges that act as an impediment to women’s career advancement, as opposed to barriers within the organization or those set by top management. As they climb higher up the corporate ladder, many women discover that their family is more important to them compared to their professions, and that they would not risk missing out on ‘special moments’ in their children’s lives (Lockwood, 2005).

**Overcoming Impediments**

What then is preventing women from making it to top positions in organizations, as they aspire to reinvent themselves in leadership positions?

**General Management Experience or Line-expertise:** In an organization, a person in the leadership role is chosen not only based on performance but also based on the person’s ability to lead a team and be an expert in his or her domain. In order to be successful as a leader, women executives have to be 'knowledge-driven' and they should lead from the front. It has been found that women leaders fail to realize this and have their energies focused on just superior performance of the job at hand. While being performance driven is important, if women leaders want to make it to the top slot and be taken seriously, they will have to possess sound knowledge of the field that they operate in and have general management experience. They also have to make time to upgrade their skills so as to stay abreast of the latest trends and developments in their professional areas. This will not only help them adapt to the changes in the business environment and foster better decision making, but also enhance their credibility and acceptability as leaders to the rest of the team, which are vital for a potential leader.

**Focus on Performance:** It is evident that people are ‘boss observers’. They like to understand what their leaders are focused on. In addition, women leaders tend to be under scrutiny more than their male counterparts. Therefore, if a woman leader fails to deliver on performance, it would highlight the fact that the leader is less than serious about her responsibilities. A woman leader therefore has to be performance driven; performance that delivers results and tells others that she means business. A distinct vision with a clearly articulated strategy and constant communication with the team will enable and boost performance. In addition, women leaders should look at focusing on processes and functions that will guarantee an improvement in the critical business bottom line results. This will enhance the credibility of women leaders.

**Build Critical Business Networks:** As women leaders, it is essential to build critical business networks. Female executives tend to focus more on positioning themselves in external networks, whereas male leaders put the major thrust of their efforts into building and nurturing networks within the company. Given the higher percentage of male leaders, we can infer that when it comes to advancing in business, external exposure is still less important than internal visibility. Another explanation might be that access to internal networks is harder for female executives, and to compensate, they seek to position themselves more actively in the external environment.

**Language That Connects:** The organization’s culture could also influence perceptions of leadership in a major way.
Each organization would have its own expectations of its leaders and will have a unique context for women in top positions. In such a scenario, women leaders need to use the right language to connect with their organizations.

**Conclusion**

As organizations face constant changes in the political, fiscal and educational scenario in our culture, there has been a significant rise in the number of women in leadership positions at these organizations. Women leaders express the same general leadership qualities as men, but may have leadership styles particularly suited to today’s needs. In previous generations, women leaders were relatively few in number — there was an occasional queen, civic or society leader, head of a family corporation usually through inheritance. Women in these positions were considered exceptional individuals rather than role models for other women or typical of society’s leaders. However, today women have a considerable leadership presence. We have women governors, mayors, business owners, officers, and CEOs of corporations. We also have women heads of state. That is quite a change!

Women have always had the capacity and desire for leadership, but were not able to express their potential because of political, economic, and societal restrictions. Now that these restrictions have been somewhat reduced, women have been able to come forth to prove their leadership abilities. Overcoming the stereotypical barriers through having significant general management experience or line-expertise, being performance driven, building critical business alliances and using language that connects will help spawn a new form of leadership with the characteristics, skills and attitudes associated with femininity, of ‘managing with a human touch’.

In addition, organizations cannot compete in a global environment without using women. They should be proactive about identifying whether the glass ceiling phenomenon is operating within the organization and should look at solutions to overcome it. It has a significant role to play by adopting an appropriate organizational culture, workplace policies and practices, change management and workforce education — to develop women leaders.

**References**


Society has its own unique ways of creating hierarchies, dichotomies, controversies. Some of these are real - but more often they are not. I am alluding to one of the classic debates which has spurred considerable research and attention of both practitioners as well as academicians: women in corporate leadership roles.

The recent years have witnessed a growing trend amongst corporates, to devise specific programs to ensure reasonable representation of women at different levels in their organization. There seems to be a growing concern about the minority representation of women in the upper echelons of management and at the helm of corporate leadership roles.

Helfat C., Wolfson P.J., & Harris D. analyzed the entire upper-executive pipeline of companies to gauge how many women would rise to the top. “Even if there are more women today in the upper pipeline than there was when we launched this research in 2000, an improvement so recent is unlikely to affect the number of female CEOs for at least a decade,” Helfat says. The study reveals a complete absence of women higher-ups in 48 percent of the largest U.S. firms, while they seem to be only token presences in others. Only 7.2 percent of 942 firms studied had more than

DEMystifying Gender Stereotypes

(It’s the classic debate of mind over matter; if you do not mind it does not matter)

RAJU MISTRY

Abstract

Given the growing concern about the low representation of women in senior leadership positions in organizations, this paper offers a different vantage point to the current scenario. Through this article the author submits that the societal definition of success is unilateral and self limiting. The article also examines the issues around the gender differences in corporate leadership. Examples from research as well as real life are presented to illustrate the importance of looking at gender equality as against differences and the need to fight the stereotypes that keep both genders from fulfilling their potential. Finally the author argues that discrimination based on gender will adversely impact the management talent pool.

About the author

Dr. Raju Mistry is currently the Group Head- Leadership Development in the Aditya Birla Group. Raju has a Masters Degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology and a Ph.D degree from Mumbai University for her Doctoral thesis in the area of Leadership Effectiveness. Her post doctoral career spans over 20 years in different Indian and Multinational Corporations which include Bayer India Ltd., Siemens Ltd., Mastech Corporation Canada, Colgate Palmolive India Ltd. and Tata Sons, and was recognized for some significant initiatives in the HR function of these companies. Raju is a proud recipient of the Chairman’s “You Can Make a Difference” Award in Colgate Palmolive for her contribution in HR.
two women in the top ranks, and 2.6 percent had more than three. On the basis of the number of women CFOs and the number of other female executives with high-level line positions (that is, with direct profit-and-loss responsibility), the authors estimate that the proportion of female CEOs will increase from the current level of about 2 percent to about 4.9 percent in 2010 and 6.2 percent in 2016.

The above study reinforces the following conclusions which have been often cited in different forums:

a. Women do not get enough opportunities to rise to the top; women tend to hit the glass ceiling in most corporations;

b. Gender discrimination gets more evident for top positions where choice of male candidates takes precedence over women candidates - other things being equal.

c. Organizations need to make a special effort to ensure representation of women at the top.

Having encountered the conclusions and beliefs expressed above in several articles, forums, panel discussions I would like to offer a different interpretation of these findings. My personal thoughts on the whole issue of minority representation of women in leadership positions are as follows:

**What is Corporate Success?**

Corporations (and society) use one yardstick to measure the success of an individual — and that yardstick is reaching the helm of corporate leadership. We are so obsessed with 'reaching the top' that nothing else matters. Over the years I have discussed career goals with many executives — at all levels — and with unfailing consistency I have found a strong need to reach the top. Since most men consider 'reaching the top' as a yardstick for their personal success - it seems plausible that the same yardstick is deployed to measure a woman's success.

I wish to share an interesting experience with about 100 young graduates, including both men and women. On being asked, what they aspire to be in their careers—being the CEO topped the list of everyone — without exception. A poll across different campuses today would reveal similar results. This presents a good deal of evidence for a strong conditioning established very early in the life of people. The parameter for success - becoming a CEO - gets etched in the minds of the young people and gets reinforced in subsequent stages of their life. I have found a large number of executives succumbing to the "rat race" for reaching the top (in a lighter vein- even if you win the race you are still a rat) and failing miserably. The high mortality rates of CEO's and the ever shortening life span of a CEO (most CEO's do not survive more than three years) are indications of this race and early conditioning.

While I am in no way denigrating the importance and significance of becoming a CEO, it is about time that people begin to understand, define and reinforce other parameters for success. Definition and recognition of the new parameters of success are critical to help people achieve what they are inherently good at. This will help draw out the abundant people potential which fails to get realized due to reasons mentioned above.

**How "Different Are the Differences?"**

Let's recognize the fact that while men and women are different due to genetic endowment they are similar in more ways than one. Media depictions of men and women as fundamentally "different" appear to perpetuate misconceptions -
The resulting "urban legends" of gender difference can affect men and women at work and at home. Psychologist Janet Shibley Hyde, (University of Wisconsin in Madison) has observed that children also suffer the consequences of exaggerated claims of gender difference — for example, the widespread belief that boys are better than girls in math. However, according to her meta-analysis, boys and girls perform equally well in math until high school, at which point boys do gain a small advantage. That may not reflect biology as much as social expectations. As a result of stereotyped thinking, mathematically talented elementary-school girls may be overlooked by parents who have lower expectations for a daughter’s success in math. Hyde cites prior research showing that parents’ expectations of their children’s success in math relate strongly to the children’s self-confidence and performance.

The issue of leadership advantages and disadvantages and the related issue of similarities and differences in the leadership of men and women are complex and controversial topics. Are differences in men and women real differences or perceived differences influenced by stereotypes of men and women? A 2005 analysis of 46 meta-analyses that were conducted during the last two decades of the 20th century emphasized the similarities in men and women in terms of personality, cognitive ability and leadership. Hyde discovered that males and females from childhood to adulthood are more alike than different on most psychological variables, resulting in what she calls a gender similarities hypothesis. Using meta-analytical techniques that revolutionized the study of gender differences starting in the 1980s, she analyzed how prior research assessed the impact of gender on many psychological traits and abilities, including cognitive abilities, verbal and nonverbal communication, aggression, leadership, self-esteem, moral reasoning and motor behaviors. Hyde observed that across the dozens of studies, consistent with the gender similarities hypothesis, gender differences had either no or a very small effect on most of the psychological variables examined. Only a few main differences appeared: compared with women, men could throw farther, and were more physically aggressive.

So if men and women are very similar why do few women make it to the top. Sandy Shullman, PhD, a psychologist and management consultant who helps major corporations retain women in leadership positions, says that women still hold only about one out of 20 top-management positions in high-profile Fortune 500 corporations - only slightly higher than 20 years ago. Partly, she says that’s because as people move up, the pyramid narrows. If women aren’t groomed or selected for these top jobs -- despite the evidence of their effectiveness -- they start to 'fall off the ladder’ quicker relative to the larger numbers of men. Also, in those bigger companies, men gain operations experience earlier in their careers, thus qualifying more for top jobs.

The implications of this finding are - women who actively aspire and pursue leadership positions eventually get there. Those who don’t may be because of reasons other than ability or competency. Hyde and her colleagues hope that people use the consistent evidence that males and females are basically alike to alleviate misunderstanding and correct unequal treatment. Hyde is far from alone in her observation that the clear misrepresentation of gender differences, given the lack of evidence, harms men and women of all ages.
Gender is inconsequential in corporate leadership - it neither poses any advantage or disadvantage to those aspiring to be at the top. Diane Halpern points out that even where there are patterns of cognitive differences between males and females, "differences are not deficiencies." The assertion that women hit the 'glass ceiling' and the absence of a level playing field to compete for the top level position may not be tenable. Women leaders who have aspired and have wanted to reach the top have made it - several examples can be found in all areas of life.

**What Does it Take to Lead Organizations?**

Ever since women began to climb the corporate ladder, researchers have asked if they have what it takes to lead groups and organizations. The answer isn't as simple as yes or no. Effectiveness of a leadership style depends on the both the context and the gender. According to the research, while men and women are equally effective in some settings, more often effectiveness depends on the fit between the setting and gender. Given the varied work settings and a workplace whose top managers are still more likely to be male, all things rarely are equal.

A 2003 meta-analysis demonstrated that women were slightly more likely than men to have the transformational leadership style, in which the manager acts more like a good teacher or coach and encourage creative solutions to problems. Research shows that such a style may be especially suited to the contemporary workplace and in today’s less hierarchical organizations. Women also appeared to reward good performance more than men, a very positive part of transactional leadership. Men were more likely to criticize subordinates and be less hands-on, styles found to be ineffective. But not all workplaces are alike: The participatory style may backfire in traditional male settings such as the military or organized sports. Conversely, the command-and-control style more typical of men may backfire in a NGO’s, service organizations and retail outlets.

At the same time, women aspiring to management may consider their gender and their behavioral style in light of where they work. They may be received more positively in sectors typically populated by women, but if they work in the many areas dominated by men, adapting their style to the more command-and-control approach may help them fit in. Similarly, men taking management jobs in women-oriented industries may tap the interpersonal skills traditionally associated with women in order to be seen as more effective. Shullman notes the value of this research in helping aspiring women understand why they may feel as if they don’t "fit in" as they climb the ladder — it may be due to a mixture of individual and contextual variables that is still being studied.

Despite these trends, psychologists caution against concluding that women or men have some sort of natural or innate management style. It’s entirely possible that women, knowing how poorly people have responded to "bossy" women, soften their approach. What’s more, the research shows only averages, or tendencies, for each gender. Some men will have more "feminine" management styles; some women will have more "masculine" management styles.

**Conclusion**

In the meantime, both women and men would do well to remember that gender-based bias can help or hinder not only themselves personally, but their organization as well. Dismissing any candidate on the basis of gender, given the findings of overall equal effectiveness, not only denies opportunity to talented
individuals but also dries up the management talent pool. Perhaps the greatest change will come when women and men agree to work together for gender equality and when every one of us fights the stereotypes that keep both genders from fulfilling their potential.

Sources & Further Reading


REDISCOVERING INDIAN WOMENS’ LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

ANURADHA MAHESH and GOPAL MAHAPATRA

Abstract

Women empowerment is a global theme. Indian challenges are not far away. This paper summarizes some of the thoughts, ideas and points based on the Round Table by HRD Network Bangalore on 15 March 2008 as well as some conceptual ideas on the theme.

About the authors

Dr. Anuradha Mahesh is Joint Secretary of Bangalore chapter and has over decade experience in Retail and is currently faculty at Welingkar Institute of Management, Bangalore.

Dr.Gopal Mahapatra the President NHRD, Bangalore has two decades of experience in HR in varied setup, prior to his current role in Oracle.

Both India and Indian women have moved from strength to strength, knocking milestones, achieving so called unachievable, making the inevitable happen with seeming ease and poise. Surely there have been hurdles, drawbacks and massive challenges, yet the spirit soars high. Indian legacy is rich with cases of women leaders, scholars, scientists, artists, poets, philosophers and even political leaders. However, the legacies although inspiring, have also been burdened with issues such as gender discrimination, social exploitation, lop sided legal system, absence of clear mandate for the advancement in economy and society.

Culturally and historically, women in India had a prominence - perhaps unequal to many other nations. From being the inspiration for art to being warriors, priestesses, prime ministers, queens, saints, teachers, philosophers, artists and even Goddesses. Indian women have been revered, worshipped and invoked respect equally from men and women.

What Then is the Significance of Celebrating Womens’ Day?

International Womens’ Day is the global day connecting all women around the world and inspiring them to achieve their full potential. International Womens’ Day celebrates the collective power of women past, present and future. In India too Womens’ Day is celebrated with great fervor. Several womens’ organizations,
government and civil society initiatives like girl child education, reservation of seats in local panchayats, etc. have led to empowering the Indian woman today.

However much more still needs to be addressed to make women equal citizens both in the public and private domain. There is an immediate need to turn the sporadic successes and achievement to more planned efforts to bring in assured consistent results. There is also a need to have a built-in mandate that deliberates developmental initiatives towards more women empowerment in terms of economic, social, and legal status in India. The International Women’s Day thus serves as a reminder of how much we have achieved and how much more still needs to be done.

Women want to partner in India’s growth. India today offers rich opportunities that need to be focused and worked upon. India is poised to be a super power and will be looked upon by the world. India will not only be the great economic power to reckon with, but will also be an exemplary nation in terms of democracy balanced with economic, social and also spiritual growth. Indian women would like to partner with their counterparts in society and economy by richly contributing to national growth. While India will take the strides to global power, Indian women would like to take this opportunity and build an agenda towards empowering women among all the sections of society and economy.

In an endeavor to generate understanding rather that simply create awareness, NHRDN Bangalore chapter decided to create a platform for the women initiative. With this spirit, a Round Table Conference with a two panel discussion was arranged on 15 March 2008. Dileep Ranjekar, CEO, Azim Premji Foundation was the Program Chairman. Ranjekar, in addition to his active participation at the event, gave immense guidance to culminate the event from concept to reality.

The following Women Leaders participated in the Panel discussions

- Ranjini Ranganath – Sr. Managing Director, Cisco Systems
- Hemalatha Mohan – Head - Operational Risk Management - ING Vysya
- Jayashree Krishna – Head – Learning Center, Talent Quest Inc.
- Nandini Ashok – GM – Facilities, Sasken Technologies
- Elaine Mathias – GM (Corporate Finance) BEL
- Lynn Tarter – Director – Business Dev.
- Aperian Global
- Sadiqa Peerbhoy – Author & Career Counsellor
- Sangita Singh – Sr. VP- Wipro
- Priya Rajagopal Chetty, VP-Stanton Chase, Moderator
- Chitra, Director, Chittam - Moderator

Startling Facts and Figures

As a Program Chairman, Ranjekar in his keynote address gave a good insight into Indian woman’s status. Woman’s role in the family has been that of the “doer” or in the true sense ”manager”. In the urban and semi urban areas, the higher income categories women have been primarily in charge of the household. They nurture, take care, manage children, elders and extended family along with the family budget and other resources.

Here are some startling statistics: In India male literacy is 78%, while among women, the literacy rate is only 52%. The men-women population ratio in 1901 was 1000:972, which in the year 2001 became 1000:933. Only 10.42% of IAS are women,
3.8% in IPS, and in parliament only 8% of MPs are women.

Leadership Will Carve the Way Further

It is not enough for best employers and HR leaders to simply focus on increasing the "number" of women in the workforce - either at the entry-level or at the mid-executive level. The priority should be also on including women in top-management positions; at the Board of Directors, President-level or CEO-level.

Many women leaders have felt the existence of the glass ceiling. Some of the leaders also pointed out that many many corporates are grappling with the situation as there has been no well crafted company vision towards women leaders. Further, the company tries to use 'One shoe fit all' kind of attitude which becomes ineffective.

In Indian context, many industries have yet to develop full-fledged agenda towards bringing HR policies and practices that will bring and support more diversity at the work place and thereby giving leadership opportunities to women. Women on the other hand have their own monsters to fight with. While working women is the reality now accepted widely in society, absence of professional support system options in the areas of child care and care for old and invalids, non availability of health care options, few educational opportunities for middle-age women make them choose a role of lesser prominence.

Unplanned approach to career growth and secondary treatment towards professional development further causes damage. Hence the growth of the majority of women remains accidental than planned.

Women leaders so far have felt that their strength has been to be compassionate, to bring in the spirit of inclusiveness and also to be able to bring in a lot more sensitivity to corporate practices and processes. Although almost all corporates have primarily developed their HR policies in keeping only men as employees, they are steadily but surely making initiatives to suit women professionals at the work place. This is also due to some of the path breaking performances of Women leaders so far.

What will Indian women leaders offer? Indian women are in many ways more than one of the symbols of India. Indian women leaders display the 'spirit of tolerance' and 'ability to reach out and weave inclusivity'. This comes with decades of socio-cultural background.

What does the Indian woman need to do? Leaders emphasize that first and foremost women must invest in their personal growth. Women must consciously stay away from falling prey to stereotypes. Professional bodies like NHRD must help create network among professionals, mentor and coach the future leaders; celebrate and share success stories on individual level and organizational level.

Emerging New Realities in Society and Corporate

The best global companies are also recognizing that recruiting, retaining and advancing women is no longer a matter of social responsibility. Successful corporations have understood the strategic and economic significance of women as executives, investors, customers and clients in the global economy. They make a clear "business case" for diversity and inclusiveness in the organization.

Emergence of the need to have diversity at the work place is also the need of the hour as more and more organizations are investing in research and development. Women also offer required competencies in the area of creativity and innovation. This has given emergence for some of the new realities in social and corporate context.
Although there is no formal research available yet, there is a growing acceptance of ‘working wife’ or ‘working mother’ in Indian families today. On the other hand, the corporate world is yet to create jobs/roles specially carved to tap competencies that women managers can offer.

Equal Pay: C & B Based on Merit

Some of the new realities have contributed to empowerment of women managers. Increasingly Corporates are transparent about the compensation and benefits offered to women managers. This is a very positive step to develop diversity at the workplace. Many industries have adapted the policies of equal pay among genders and largely the compensation package is being designed based on merit.

In the Indian context, IT sector is where women managers have been very effective at almost every level of the organization. Corporates have taken measures such as flexi-timing, work at home options, conveyance from work to home, facilities like video conference and other IT enabled solutions. However, many other industries like manufacturing industry, Retail and CPG, Service industry are yet to ape such initiatives. Under such circumstances, it is challenging to the HR managers to understand the real needs of their employees and promote such practices.

Gender Diversity in the Workplace

In the past, all women in the workplace were automatically assigned to temporary, part-time or low responsibility jobs because it was understood that their first priority was taking care of their families. Unmarried women were likely to quit as soon as they married (often to an upcoming executive in the company). Married women were likely to quit as soon as they became pregnant. Women with children were understood to take more care of their children than about work. In addition, there was a widespread belief that women were not as capable as men, either physically, mentally or emotionally.

Organizations have been slowly adjusting to these changes; learning to treat women as equal to men and not as a potential date! In fact, many organizations now keep their employees well informed about their policies against such harassment. Some organizations are also offering help in terms of availing legal advice, counseling and communication through email and blogging.

The corporate world has been, and is one, where men can escape away from home. Men made the rules, and when women come into this world, they were not sure how to conduct themselves. In the Indian context, men learn to see women as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. The idea of women as colleagues and as equals is very new and quite intimidating. Training initiatives will help build the ambience of trust and mutual respect.

Women too, coming into the corporate world, are awed by its norms. Previously, their socialisation was only about their home and family. Study and work outside the home are all short-term activities, in preparation for the homemaker role. Small surprise, then, that those women are not prepared for the workplace, do not last long and only a few get to the top. In the last decade, women in other parts of the industrialised world have experienced what is popularly known as the ‘glass ceiling’ phenomenon, which means women find that they can only rise to a certain level in corporations and no further.

What Can be Done to Take it Further?

Women managers in corporates and society are going to be recurring source that
will contribute to future growth. Corporate policies and practices will further empower them. Even today, some strategic decisions need to be taken in terms of creating opportunities for building diversity not only at entry level but to the highest possible level.

Some of the practices needed, are to develop and monitor built-in retention policies so that it will ensure the diversity and inclusiveness towards women managers. In keeping with the fact that women have several challenges, perhaps society and corporates need to bring in 'positive discrimination' towards women.

Communities and Networks
Communities and networks aim specifically at women to address feelings of isolation and exclusion from social and professional networks. Such spaces offer new avenues to get people together, share ideas, meet like-minded people, learn from each other's experience or find out about opportunities. Real life discussions to engage all levels of industry, including designers and company directors help reflect on critical issues faced by women.

Many initiatives of Government and NGO's go unnoticed due to lack of information and knowledge. Communities and networks can create the awareness to reach out.

Visibility
Initiatives to improve visibility – providing opportunities for women to be heard and seen – like networks, provide something individuals can identify with, and also, significantly make individuals feel that they are wanted. The benefits of visibility initiatives result from the attention they brings to the issues being addressed rather than just the spotlight they put on individual designers or IT professionals.

Role models are also believed to play a key part in the power of inspiration. More importantly achievements should be celebrated.

Training and Education
Training and education in softer nontechnical skills may help women feel confident and inspired. Core technical skill acquisition is rarely an issue among the highly qualified women. Additional sources of information through websites and internal communication systems such as employee blogs, magazines, bulletins are also a good way to keep up to date with events and training.

Women Centric Policies at Workplace
To encourage the diversity at the workplace, there is an urgent need to have HR policies in terms of recruitment, placements as well as training and development of Women professionals.

Mere copying of the HR policies from US or Europe may not be practical in India. Hence the policies must be based on the Indian context. Some corporates have introduced initiatives in terms of flexitimes, extended maternity leave, crèche facility at work place etc. Women professionals have to use these flexi options and demonstrate commitment to work. However, these seem to be only sporadic efforts. Initiatives based on research and understanding are the real needs of Indian working woman.

Conclusion - Empowerment Strategies
We are living in exciting times in India.

1. Women managers have by their achievement so far proven that they bring in excellence towards work place and society and will be a major source of contribution towards Indian growth. What they expect from the society and at workplace is a mentoring; coaching and networking opportunity.
2. It is important to distinguish and address individually the more tangible barriers to women’s participation in the field, (e.g. Work-life balance) and the problems of perceived competence in doing the job or the unwritten gendered work cultures. Initiatives need to address the issues that appear to disadvantage women at a practical level (childcare, better access to finance, entrepreneurial opportunities), whilst not neglecting the importance of building confidence, providing inspiration and building female friendly networks and spaces.

3. Networks, visibility and learning are all critical to achieving gender inclusion and are all forms of empowerment.

4. Empowerment strategies offer a good way to address the tensions emerging from gender inclusion through the judicious use of women-friendly spaces open also to men.

5. Empowerment strategies also need to be informed about the wants and needs of target users. Empowerment strategies flagging also often touch upon their ability to listen to and talk to various (gendered) users in an original and effective manner.

6. Empowerment and other inclusion strategies, by increasing the proportion of women, may promote further changes in gendered cultures and practices and create a more welcoming space for women.

7. The empowerment of women needs to be endorsed at industry and company level, as well as by individuals themselves leading to higher productivity, organizational effectiveness and harmony.

At this stage keeping diversity at work and empowerment of women in background, the following Action Agenda/Implications for NHRD appears before us. This could be explored further and are listed below:

- Forum for mentoring working Women at local chapter level.
- Guide corporates to design policies for bringing in Diversity at work place — more influencing policies of the organizations.
- Coaching HR professionals to build in gender neutral HR policies specifically in recruitment, training and career advancement.
- Celebrate success at both individual & organizational level.
- Collaborative research between NHRD, Academia & participating organizations (other chapters of NHRD can collaborate too).

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PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

SUMITRA SESHAN

Abstract

This article analyzes the current statistics of women in corporate leadership. It gives a picture as to what is the state in the western developed nations and also in the developing nations in the east. India in specific is showing an increase in the number of women in corporates but still is far behind other nations when it comes to women leading organizations. The interesting aspects here would be issues like Glass ceiling — A Myth or reality, Women do not make good leaders — An opinion and not a fact, Barriers to women’s growth in corporate leadership. The article also comes up with a number of steps for the progress of women.

About the author

Sumitra Seshan is an Instrumentation and Control Engineer with her Masters in Business Administration from University of Toronto, Canada. She has worked with Fifth Generation Technologies India (P) Ltd, Kirloskar Consultants, Pune and MASCON Marketing Services Inc, Toronto, Canada. She has 14 years of rich experience in leading business and marketing strategies, operations, administrative and sales & training functions.

“W omen hold up half the sky” goes a Chinese proverb. This aptly represents the role that women play in all aspects of human civilization, more so in the current scenario of economic development. Women are essential to economic development in every sense. As economies across the globe have become more interconnected and interdependent than ever, women’s increased participation in the work place and their contribution to the economies of their families, countries and the world need to become significant. Yet, despite the fact that women constitute approximately half the population, women constitute a much smaller percentage of representation in the high-level positions in the corporate world, and female executive and managers often face unique challenges.

A Statistical Look at the Gender Divide in the Corporate World

As per a study conducted by an independent agency, shows that women continue to be severely underrepresented in top corporate leadership positions and the projected trend indicates that it could take at least 40 years for women to achieve parity with men in officer ranks. This 2005 study that focused on women corporate officers and top earners of the Fortune 500 companies found that average Fortune 500 company women occupied only 9.4 percent of clout titles (those higher than vice president), up from 7.9 percent in 2002.

However a study conducted specifically targeting the Indian Corporates which was presented by Roopa Purushothaman, Chief Economist, The Future Group says that
women's employment participation (the number of women working as a share of working-age women) grew to 31 percent in 2005 from 26 percent in 2000 — the first rise seen in decades. Also as the IT-ITES sector moves forward, more women have been joining these industry segments. A previous study conducted by NASSCOM revealed that in the Indian IT industry the percentage of women will grow from 30% to 45% by 2010. The male-female ratio is also expected to improve from 76:24 in 2005 to 65:35 by end of 2008.

Despite all this feel-good news, Indian companies seriously lack in having women in senior management roles. According to a recent study, only 26.1 percent of the listed companies (392 of 1,500 firms) have a woman on their boards. Out of the 278 directors on the BSE Sensex companies, there are only 10 women directors. Apart from this, women executives in India earn 40 percent less than what men earn over their entire career. Even when compared to global counterparts, corporate India stands below average. Over 77 percent of the 200 largest companies in the world, as ranked by Fortune, had at least one women director on their board as of 2006. Only 36 percent of Indian companies have women holding senior management positions as compared to 91 percent of companies in China. These figures force us to ponder on how successful women have been in executive leadership positions in Corporate India.

The statistics above clearly points to the fact that there are some underlying common issues whether it is the Western and more developed nations or the Eastern and the developing nations that act as barriers for women to progress in the corporate leadership that cut across various geographical and cultural boundaries.

**Stereotyping the Women**

Contrary to the popular belief that women do not aspire to be competing for top positions and are not ambitious enough to take up the hard struggle of climbing the corporate ladder, studies suggest that there have been few dramatic changes in senior-level women's attitude and experiences within the last few years. Overall large majorities of women are satisfied with their current positions, employers and compensations. Of women who are not already in top leadership, most aspire to be there - yet the share of women in the top level positions still seem to be in single digits across various industries.

**Glass Ceiling - A Myth or Reality?**

Interestingly, most accomplished women do not really find that there exists a glass ceiling in corporates and agree that it is more of a self creation than in reality. Women achievers like their male counterparts are willing to put in the necessary hard work and long hours that is demanded by the organizations and thus has managed to stay in the struggle for success. However it is not an easy path to undertake as is the case of a man. It is during the mid-career that women find it difficult to cope with the stressful demands of the corporate life and are strike a balance between their work and home life. Eventually unable to withstand the pressure, many women voluntarily drop off from the career path and choose to stay away from the respective professions that they have been trained and performing well up to that point in time. It is therefore very essential for corporate world to recognize the specific problems related to the women work force and come up with innovative policies and practices to help them continue to stay in the work force.

**Women Do Not Make Good Leaders - An Opinion And Not A Fact!**

The differences between management and leadership are quite subtle and the terms are normally used interchangeably. While management is about planning,
implementing and controlling, leadership requires vision, ability to take untreaded path, flexibility and motivational ability and capability to forge ahead. Traditionally women are considered to be good managers but hardly thought as leaders who can drive an organization ahead of its competition.

However there is a clear change in the leadership trends of today! It is considered to be very important for leaders to possess the traits such as nurturing culture, collaboration, searching for alternate solutions, serving people, thinking on partners and cooperation as against the traditional traits of being aggressive, assertive etc. As a matter of fact, a leader being over assertive whether it is a man or a woman is considered to more of a handicap than a quality that a leader must possess. In order for companies to stay competitive and be innovative in the strategies, it is proven that the 'transformational style' of leadership where the bosses are considered to be more inspirational mentors who encourage underlings to develop their abilities and creatively change their organization is found to be more effective than the 'transactional style' of leadership where poor performance is punished and good performance is rewarded. The transformational style suits women more because women by nature are more nurturing and take an inclusive approach in managing. Women who have carefully adapted such transformational style of leadership would not only succeed but have every chance to even outperform their male counterparts.

**Family Commitment**

Reasons such as family commitment, marriage and maternity seem to be the top reasons for attrition when it comes to women work force, whereas better career prospects and salary seem to be the primary reasons for attrition in case of men. As per a recent study conducted, even in industries such as IT/IES that boasts of 35% of women in workforce, only statutory policies such as maternity have been implemented in all organizations, while innovative practices such as flexi-time, work from home, reduced pay for reduced work are still sporadic and informal, found to be more prevalent in bigger organizations while almost non-existent in most SMEs.

**Lack of Line Management Skills**

One of the blatant differences between the careers of women and men is that women typically spend their lives working in staff positions while men tend to excel in performing line jobs. Typically, the line jobs are the ones that are seen as making a direct contribution to the company’s profits and the staff positions are always considered to be the cost/support centres of any organization. Therefore it is the line positions that gain more visibility within the organization and end up having better pay and career growth. In short, women who would like to grow into leadership roles, necessarily have to equip themselves with skills that would land them in line positions and be willing to take the risk associated with line positions.

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5 A recent study conducted by Empowering Women in IT (eWIT), a not-for-profit organization working towards Enhancing the Share and Sustainability of Women in IT.
Exclusion from Informal Networking

It is widely believed that only 10 to 20% of jobs filled are ever publicized. In many fields, jobs are often filled through word-of-mouth notifications communicated through formal or informal networks. With women being excluded from the informal networking opportunities that traditionally men enjoy, it proves to be one of the bigger barriers that women face in advancing in their respective careers.

Lack of Senior Mentors

Women are relatively new entrants to the workforce when compared to men, and therefore availability of qualified women mentors who can coach, provide challenges, promote visibility and offer access to networks and alliance and build confidence all of which a mentor does are quite rare in many industry segments. Also, in their careers and mentoring relationships, women have different expectations, a greater willingness to accommodate and gender-related workplace constraints, expect more support and would more likely discuss details, acknowledge uncertainty and seek help.

Steps for Women's Progress

Corporates' Perspective

“Nothing, arguably, is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of the political, economic, and social participation and leadership of women”.

One of the key learnings that need to be adopted at all levels of an organization, especially for the boardroom is the role that diversity plays in survival. The more diverse an organization's management and staff, the deeper and broader the pool of ideas available to meet a changing marketplace and react to competitive threats and other business problems. The more open a company is to new, diverse ideas the better prepared it will be to survive adversity and produce creative, strategic approaches to thrive in the future. Meanwhile, increasing the diversity of ideas, talents, and perspectives within the leadership team and across the organization ensures the entire enterprise is better equipped to face new threats, solve critical problems, and create additional opportunities for growth.

Women professionals' perspective

Women need to realize that in reality, they are in minority and therefore their missteps would be conspicuous so would be their achievements. Women should aim to take up serious and difficult assignments, equip themselves with necessary skill sets for performing their jobs well and be willing to take more risks and challenges in their career. This would automatically put them in a visible position within an organization where their voices would be heard loud and clear.

Women who are more willing to recognize the fact that stereotyping do exist at work places would be better equipped to explore newer ways and venues to seek help and support from their respective organizations so that they can perform the balancing act in a better manner. Seeking influential mentors within the organization and learning to collaborate and work would also tremendously help women achieve greater heights in their career path.

Summary

In summary, women who realize and appreciate that their strength is after all 'being different' than men and are willing to work towards their strength and not necessarily ape men or try to do or react to things in the same manner that a man would, will no doubt reach greater heights in the corporate world!
DEBUNKING RATIONALIZATIONS

SHELLY SINGH

Abstract

This article highlights the current trend of women, especially in India also breaking away from the conventional expectations from her and moving towards excellence in whichever field she chooses while others evils in the society like female infanticide still exists. Today organizations also value a female employee just like her male counterpart and have been showing a change with better work conditions and opportunities for women. But what is most important is that a woman has to believe in her ability and act. Indian women have to use the opportunities that are coming their way especially with the current growth rate of the country.

About the author

Shelly is Vice President - Business & Process Development at PeopleStrong HR Services, a Talent Process company. She is one of the cofounders of PeopleStrong - the first HR entrepreneurial experience. She has been associated with companies like Sony, Flextronics (erstwhile Hughes) & Hewitt as a Process Specialist. Shelly is a post graduate in Business Management from Narsee Monjee University.

The United States is on the road to probably nominate and elect the First Woman President. Your initial thoughts perhaps would be - "What the heck! It has made headlines more than once now in all kinds of media!"

I have however, mixed feelings about this in my mind and maybe even my heart as well. Firstly, why the fuss and awe? Women have been working in organizations for over five decades now. They have not only contributed to the growth, culture and performance of their organization, but to society as a whole. So, why fight a war of words when it doesn't exist?

Secondly, isn't this a great paradox? We live in an era where the gender status within the social fabric is powerfully defined by the socio-economic strata with few exceptions. I am reminded and deeply saddened by the social message on the electronic media I saw a couple of days ago about female foeticide.

My mixed feelings aside, I will consciously choose to restrict myself to writing about urban women who have gone on to prove themselves as equals among mortals.

Women in Corporate India

Women in India have proven and excelled in all segments of the Industry whether it be technology, literature, art, sports etc. Women continue to significantly contribute to almost every industry segment. The Indian woman has transcended her domestic roots and is well acclaimed on a Global footprint. Names like Indra Nooyi,
Chanda Kochar, Naina Lal Kidwai, Saniya Mirza immediately flash through our minds when we talk of Internationally acclaimed Indian Women leaders.

There are noted reasons for this increased parity in all industry sectors in India, in the women : men ratio in recent times — Companies are offering the same opportunities and facilities to all its employees. The performance management systems are based on meritocracy rather than any other preferential performance systems.

As women have risen up the corporate ladder, they have acquired leadership roles and have been assigned higher organizational responsibilities. Similar to their male counterparts, women in leadership positions encounter everyday situations where they handle power, exercise authority, provide direction and strategic initiatives, participate in policy formulation and also interface with the external environment. So where is the difference? That is a question that has been pondered on for the last five decades — How many names of women CXOs you can recall? Not many.

This reality suggests that organizations need to perhaps evaluate specific issues that confront women, men, and organizations due to a woman’s sustained presence, increasingly higher responsibilities, decision-making roles and rise in the corporate hierarchy.

Women in such key roles encounter interfacial issues with superiors, colleagues and subordinates of both genders resulting in unique dilemmas. These dilemmas are anchored in the socio-cultural context, the organizational culture, the external business environment, as well as in their own maps and definitions of role taking.

**The Real Challenge**

More and more women who opt for careers have to make hard choices — they strive to perform and achieve so that they can succeed in reaching senior positions. They also have to maintain boundaries between personal and professional roles and relationships, demonstrating efficiency at the workplace and managing familial roles effectively.

With the necessity to conform to these two, often conflicting, sets of expectations, high-profile women leaders are relentlessly held hostage to a higher benchmark of standard as compared with their male counterparts. If women are to claim their share of leadership positions and operate effectively within them, it is important that both women and men be aware of these differential expectations — how they affect both leaders and constituents, and understand what responses may be useful.

Corporations operate as a social structure, made up of numerous practices that maintain a cultural system of dominance. Responses to women and men in leadership roles are conditioned by such a social structure. The practices that maintain a power system include patterns of shared understandings about a set of values and participating in them, expectations, norms and roles. This social structure transcends, in some respects, the wishes or behavior of any particular individual and has a tendency to shape decisions, interactions, and social relations to fit it. The social fabric of conformance is what is required to change.

**Change is on the Way**

The good news is that some of them have already led us on that way. There are many remarkable stories happened or just waiting to happen — I will quote two of many noteworthy.

Today ICICI, India's second-largest and fastest-growing bank, is the market leader in retail banking, with more than 15 million customers, accounting for more than a third of India’s total retail credit. ICICI has
made a name for itself by recognizing female talent. Three of the five members of the bank’s executive board are women, as are 13 of its 40 top managers.

Biocon is another remarkable entrepreneurial story led by Kiran Mazumdar Shaw. She is a first generation entrepreneur who was awarded India’s highest civilian award for her pioneering efforts in biotechnology in 2005. She started the company 25 years ago with only $2500 and up until recently took no outside funding! Overall there are only 15% women managers in BioCon and 25% working in R&D. Yet at the lower levels, 49% of the employees are women.

The Formula

So what drives these women in organizations to break the so called glass ceiling? Whether or not it is put into actual practice, the ascendancy of the democratic, people-oriented leadership practice forms the contemporary context of leadership today.

And women in general are not only result-focused, but are also interested in growth of the people around them and employ a democratic approach to leadership. Women tend to lead through the centre with consensus building as their leadership style.

Moreover, male and female leadership styles are becoming more similar [as] men and women’s lives become more similar, and organizations achieve a better balance between women and men. Organizations that have looked beyond the gender and viewed employees as individuals have understandably created a workplace for equal opportunity.

Organizations who don’t expect women to behave as men do have paved way for creating Role models for the coming generations. It’s a conscious choice of an Employer to accept the diversity of workforce that makes all the difference.

And to make all this happen, a woman needs to get out of the stereotype and really believe in her own ability.
- Be an individual so people view you first, not your gender.
- One doesn't need to take on "male" interests or stereotypical behavior.
- Look to role models. If it’s been done before, you can do it too.
- Find the leadership style that works for you, be it the classically female "leading from the center" style, the classically male individualistic style or somewhere in between.
- The organization needs to know that your personal goals are separate from your work ones — just like your coworkers.
- Women need to seek real allies. Gender does not always predict the level of support you’ll receive.

We are at the most amazing opportunity for India with an enviable growth rate. We are at a vantage point where we know what our future is in terms of economic growth. Combine this with the incredible amount of wealth India has in spiritual and traditional insights and we are really on the inflexion point — a miracle waiting to happen. This is an exciting time in business and for women in business. The events will be the result of a wonderful convergence of the recognition of the need for more women in leadership positions in business and an increasing sense of confidence in women themselves.

Specifically for women, they have a great role in the India Story. Women are the greatest exponents of value systems. It comes to them very naturally — they could play a key role if they look beyond tradition. They need not be exerting their authority and autonomy; but if their vision is expanded — no matter what role they choose for themselves — they will be great influence in shaping tomorrow’s world and vision.
STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART:
AN INTERVIEW WITH D SABITHA

RACHEL PHILIP

Introduction to D Sabitha

What if you could harness the power of the free market to solve the problems of poverty, hunger and inequality? To some, it may sound impossible, but IAS officer D. Sabitha is doing exactly that! “Leaders are not only born but created and nurtured every day” she says. In fact leadership is the same whether in the corporate or a leader of a self help group. Sabitha has impacted the illiterate and rubbed shoulders with politicians making unique contributions to a civil, democratic society.

About the author

Rachel currently works with Exclusive Search Recruitment Consultants, Chennai and is an MBA HR, Mount Carmel Institute of Management, Bangalore.

27th March 2008... In the second floor of her office, Sabitha comes across as an IAS officer, CEO, daughter, wife and mother all rolled into one.

The morning began in her cosy office with Sabitha, instructing her administration to have her flight tickets booked for Bangalore to visit an Industrial Estate there. Then, a little girl in school uniform steps in and announces “Ma.. I am back from school” Have we not had a perfect beginning to an interview on work life balance ?

D.Sabitha — CEO — GISS and the COO of TANSTIA-FNF Service Centre. Sabitha is an officer of the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) of the 1988 batch. With her long tenure in the administrative services, she has varied expertise in the areas of Finance, Industrial Development, Export Promotion as well as administration under the powers of the state government.

To many she seems like an intelligent lady who has worked in the Indian Administrative Services for years. To my eyes, she comes across as a humble lady whose achievements through work speaks much louder than words. She seems to find it easy to balance her career and home with a little bit of planning.

Sabitha refuses to believe that true leaders exist only in the corporate sector. Her convincing argument weighs heavily on our minds as she shares that 30% of the IAS cadre are women in Tamil Nadu. All her dealings with the Government have been comfortable and easy. As an IAS officer, she finds herself treated on par with men. In fact as a woman, she receives so much more appreciation from the common man visa a vie a corporate leader. As an IAS officer she has gained exposure to areas such as tea production, social welfare,
revenue department, worked in the Planning Commission and IIDFC (Development Financial Institution). Hence Sabitha has understood social issues at a deeper level, worked for public well being and without surprise public praise comes by naturally.

At first she seems poised and composed but it is apparent that her heart lies in the "Self Help Movement" which is a tremendous success in Tamil Nadu. She initiated the Self Help Movement in the 1980s. These Self Help Groups are on the same lines as the "Grameen Credit Programme" in Bangladesh. Professor Muhammad Yunus & Grameen Bank were awarded The Nobel Peace Prize for 2006 for their efforts to create economic and social development from below.

Self-Help Group (SHG) is a small voluntary association of poor people, preferably from the same socio-economic background. People come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help. A common fund is opened in the name of the SHG at a Bank. This innovative banking program provides poor people—mainly women—with small loans which they use to launch businesses and lift their families out of poverty.

She convincingly argues “How come we do not acknowledge these women as leaders? Is it because they are poor or because the urban only hear through media of a Indra Nooyi or a Kiran Majumdar Shaw?”

We cannot ignore the interruptions from her uniform clad daughter reminding her to join her for lunch after school. She gently calms her daughter and quickly shifts her focus back to us.

Sabitha looks upto Ranjana Kumar, Chairperson and Managing Director of Indian Bank in 2000 who went on to become Chairperson, NABARD. Ranjana championed the cause of encouraging the practical thinking of these uneducated women and was instrumental in setting up Micro Finance Institutions. Today NGOs and Developmental Agencies have discovered the leadership potential of these Self Help Groups (SHGs).

Once again the intranet rings with her daughter nagging her for lunch. We wonder how a lady is managing family and career. Thus we begin a shift in our discussion to the domestic front.

Humbly, she opens up to us and confesses that she completely surrendered to the stereotype models set by her mother and grand mother. It came as a pleasant surprise to us that a senior IAS officer believes in bringing a cup of water for her husband when she returns home. She believes that it makes no difference to the husband if she is a CEO or an IAS officer.

She emphasis that balancing roles requires good planning. The two years of rigorous training as an IAS officer has helped her be a better planner. It is part of the IAS curriculum to wake up early, spend sometime in mediation and exercise before beginning the day. These disciplines help balancing all the different roles - IAS officer, CEO, wife, mother, daughter - into one.

The sensitiveness of a mother is apparent when she discloses how much effort it takes to ensure that her daughter is always safe when she is travelling on official work. She emphasizes the need to build a stable friend and family support system. Sabitha is married to a I.G. of Police. Her concerns, choices and decisions all continue to revolve around social acceptance, tradition, rituals, philosophies handed down through generations. Women consider the overall picture and do not approach issues on a basic "yes" or "no" choice.

She was exposed to the Civil services at an early age by her father and grand father.
who were also involved in serving the public. Her education at a Kodaikanal ICSE school was not another 'run of the mill' school with emphasis on academics alone. She gained exposure to debating early and never missed a chance to speak publicly on social issues. Sabitha lost all her stage fear and till date carries this as an advantage when she addresses various forums.

Sabitha considers herself as a public servant who needs to constantly work hard, whether in public or private life. There is no difference between her, an IAS officer or an ordinary woman. Every woman has the inherent capacity to be sensitive, multi task and take up responsibility. The only disadvantage they face is a physical weaker form. Women inherently make decisions after considering social factors which are very different from the logical thinking of a man. Women consider issues from a psychological level and it is an advantage to her.

Sabitha is a conscientious worker who delivers work before any finger is raised and ends the discussion with a small tip. "If you work hard and deliver, you are respected. Every lady needs to be bold and conduct herself well".
STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART:
AN INTERVIEW WITH NIRMALA PRASAD

POOJA ANN MARTIN

Introduction to Dr. Nirmala Prasad

A strong willed lady who started working at a very young age of 16 while she was still studying is today the principal of M.O.P. Vaishnav College in Chennai. She is not only the head of this well know Women’s College but also the source of support and motivation to the many young women who enter the corporate world under her guidance. Her message to women who want to make it to the top in their work place is “Never sacrifice more that what is required.”

About the author

Pooja is currently working as an executive with Exclusive Search Recruitment Consultants, Chennai and is a B.E. Biotechnology.

This is the era of women’s liberation. Women are being seen in corporate leadership positions everywhere, from Indra Nooyi for Pepsico to Kiran Majumdar Shaw for Biocon. They are showcasing their skills to the world, and acting as role models for women in India. However, the increase of women in the corporate world, which stands at an estimated thirty to forty percent in the IT industry, brings along with it the inevitable questions of the "glass ceiling" and "work life balance". We recently talked to Dr. Nirmala Prasad on these issues. She is a lady who is extremely passionate about her work and is also ensuring that the girls who pass out of her college are able to stand up to the expectations of todays corporate world.

Nirmala has a lot to say about the glass ceiling. While she agrees that a lot more women are getting into the IT industry now, she says that the percentage of women at every stage of the corporate ladder is steadily diminishing. Men still don’t want to work under female superiors, and surprisingly, neither do women, as they think that they will find male bosses more sympathetic to their problems. However she points out that a man who is competent will not mind the gender of his boss. She says that a lot of women are not supported by their family and especially husbands, as they are wary of having a wife who earns more than them. Women are supposed to manage a corporate career and family life, with little consideration or help from their husbands. But having said that, Nirmala also thinks that Indian women are also equally responsible for stalling their careers. She says that new mothers are more than happy to sacrifice their careers for managing their children. However they also feel guilty about leaving their offspring in a day care center. She also adds that most existing women in corporate leadership roles are divorced or spinsters, and don’t provide a good role model for aspiring women who want to be successful in both career and home making. She says
that women forget to understand that by the time they are forty and their children have grown up, they will have gotten frustrated with their life and repent for the sacrifices they made by opting out of a successful career.

When asked about the role of parents in nurturing leadership talents, she agrees that parents play a vital role. Giving her own example, she says that she had five sisters and two brothers, but was never discriminated against in the family. She says that children should not be overprotected, nor should they be given too many luxuries, as deprivation can bring out the best in people. She says that parents should involve their children in decision making, as it makes children independent and more responsible for their actions. She goes on to say that schools and educational institutions also play a very important role in nurturing leadership skills. Girls should not be overprotected which will rob off their leadership traits. Their skills should be developed so that they can maximize their risk taking ability.

Nirmala believes strongly in the power of women and feels that with the right training and education they can become world class leaders. Her college, like her, is committed to the cause for empowering women through a holistic approach. A woman can be said to be empowered if she is trained to identify her hidden talents. Students have to be trained in the art of management and good communication skills. She has to be nurtured as a leader with social consciousness, skillfully equipped to be economically independent and has to develop a holistic personality. The process of empowerment can be said to be complete if she can maintain a work life balance such that she can take care of her family without ignoring her career.

MOP Vaishnav College for women offers various opportunities to nurture talent in women. These include workshops and seminars, where women can work on their presentation skills, knowledge management, learning skills while improving their intellectual capability. Training in leadership skills is built into the pedagogy. All the activities of the college are aimed at building communication, organizational skills and developing the holistic personality of women students. Students are given the opportunity to reach their full leadership potential as they strive for leadership excellence, growth and maturity. Students in the final year are also taken through a finishing program wherein the strengths required for an ideal homemaker and the skills to balance family and career are reinforced.

Nirmala feels that the most important issue affecting women today is the lack of financial independence. If intellectual advancement enables a woman to think for herself, financial security empowers her with the freedom to act. The college approaches this using the Entrepreneurship Development Cell, which trains students to be job providers, helping to create a vibrant team of budding entrepreneurs. The ED cell seeks to remove the barriers to spontaneous growth of entrepreneurship through appropriate training, including activities like identifying products in demand, planning a venture, selecting the technology required with the means available, managing personnel, taking strategic decisions and effective communication skills. The college also offers training on how to succeed in the male dominated world outside college.

While it is true that women have a tough road to climb to reach to the top, there are also several qualities that a woman possesses that give her an advantage over
her male counterparts. Women offer a different perspective from that of men. They have better budgeting skills, better judgment, and have a tendency to think of all outcomes due to a naturally cautious mentality. Women are also good strategic planners, have good adaptability, have good networking skills, are soft spoken, have patience, are good at hiding their emotions, and do not have an ego barrier. If a woman is able to identify these talents and showcase these skills in her workplace she can definitely be equal or better than a man. Therefore women have to recognize these strengths and leverage them to become future managers, entrepreneurs and leaders of the society.

In answer to the most frequently asked question on work-life balance, she says that a woman should have an open dialog with her spouse right from the beginning to avoid problems. Women should also learn how to handle men, make them feel comfortable, balance the institution of marriage, parenting and manage her career successfully. They should get their husbands involved in daily household activities, and being emotionally less stable than men, should get her spouse to help her handle her personal life and succeed in her career.

There are many successful women all around the world from whom one can learn. A woman should be willing to learn, look ahead and leap. She certainly has wings and given the right opportunity can fly and reach the highest peaks.
SHIFTING PARADIGMS IN A WOMAN’S CAREER

RUPANDE PADAKI

Abstract

The gender inequality is blocking the rapid development of the society. India’s commitment to the objective of economic growth with social justice can be fulfilled only if brought into the mainstream of economic activity not as beneficiaries of the socio-economic growth but as social change agents and social reformers. Policies and programmes have to be evolved so that development of women takes place in a planned manner.

The approach to women’s development is through empowerment process with total involvement of concerned groups. One of the significant developments in recent years in India in this direction is the development of an entrepreneurship process among women. This is a process of developing women in leadership positions where they can achieve economic independence and social transformation.

About the author

Rupande Padaki began her professional career in the Human Resources Division of Ahmedabad Textile Industry’s Research Association (ATIRA) in 1970. Padaki is a Founder-Director of The P&P Group, a management resource centre, Bangalore. She is a regular contributor to professional publications on the subjects of organizational diagnosis, training for counselling, assessment of human attributes, and entrepreneurship in women in socio-economic development.

This paper was presented at the 25th International Congress of Applied Psychology, Singapore, 2002 as part of the Invited Symposium on Women and Work in Developing Countries. It is based on research and consultancy work undertaken by The P&P Group during the last fifteen years in Asian countries related to empowerment of women through entrepreneurship. The emerging perspectives are discussed which should help all concerned to design and implement appropriate activities to facilitate development of leadership through entrepreneurship among women.

The concepts of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship are rooted in the sphere of economic activity but the entrepreneurial process goes beyond economics with significant influence to the social system. The essence of the concept requires the existence of economic opportunity, sympathetic cultural forces, supportive government action and strong personal values and traits. So far gender specific entrepreneurship models have not received adequate attention. The definitions, conceptual frames and theories are generally regarded as neutral and assumed to be applicable to both man and
woman. In practice, however, there appear to be some differences in the circumstances under which the woman displays entrepreneurial behaviour. On surface the problems of conceiving, nurturing and nourishing an enterprise may be the same for the man as well as the woman entrepreneur.

However, what is generally overlooked is the magnitude of problems faced by the woman in getting an enterprise going due to social and cultural factors, and the gender discrimination that prevails in society at the level of family, school, employment and such other important settings, inhibiting her overall development and growth. The task of entrepreneurship development for women in the context of the developing country can be understood through the perspective shown in Figure 1.

We have a vision of a society which is characterized by a just and equitable development process, steadily overcoming the problems of inequality. One of the ways to achieve this is to make women as significant contributors to the economy through their own enterprises.

Within the realm of entrepreneurship it appears relatively easier for women in the more advantaged segments of the population to set up and sustain enterprises of their own. The real challenge in developing countries appears to be in bringing the vast majority of the disadvantaged into the mainstream of economic activity.

The Ground Experience

Figure 2 reveals the range of concerns addressed by the P&P Group through assignments. The next section describes findings on the subject from a set of studies undertaken by The P&P Group.
**Figure 1**

**SYSTEM LEVELS OF ANALYSIS**

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**Individual Level: Significance of Personality**

A research study was undertaken to examine the significance of personality theory in the development of women entrepreneurs. This study focused on the dimension of autonomy and individual’s value system in personality of women entrepreneurs.

Autonomy is a concept commonly referred to in the literature on entrepreneurship. According to McClelland (1987) economic motivation, need for independence, achievement orientation and past experience of accomplishment drive people to be entrepreneurs. Taylor (1988) in her study on women entrepreneurs found that self confidence and a drive for autonomy are the factors contributing to the making of women entrepreneurs. The conditions in one's environment that facilitate or restrict experiences of autonomy would be reflected in the values...
held predominantly by the social system. Similarly, the concept of value system is considered at the core of individual’s personality, reflecting in behavior in all settings.

Using the Critical Incident Technique to explore the relevance of autonomy and a paired comparison method to understand relative positions of 10 values selected from Rokeach’s list, forty women entrepreneurs engaged in a variety of activities in the city of Bangalore were covered in the study.

Women are increasingly striving and learning to balance between happy experiences of autonomy in their business sphere and responsibility towards family.

Regional Policy - Asia

A trend in many Asian countries has been in the emergence of the small scale sector of industry, in response to a complex mix of factors in the process of globalization. One important consequence has been the focus on women entrepreneurship, as stressed by various international agencies, the respective governments and many NGOs. By and large the approach, strategy and inputs are similar across many Asian countries.

The five countries covered in the programme were India, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

It was clear that what is needed is largely in the realm of Institution Development in Asia by developing effective networks as a specialized pursuit in entrepreneurship development. (Informal networks are sentiment based and not likely to last long.) Through such networks trainer-training can be strengthened and resources can be shared. For entrepreneurship development "movement" advocacy and policy framework for regional, South-South development is attempted.

The Intervention Challenge

As Figure 3 suggests, we must recognize that at "higher" system levels of intervention our available knowledge of the social change process is incomplete. Correspondingly, the methodology is rather limited, and probably weak in actual impact. Generalized "models" of intervention make assumptions of similarities over differences across a wide range of socio-politico-economic conditions. The interventions in the environment are often far more significant than the training input to make a person an entrepreneur. In a developing country, creating a supporting environment amounts to the creation of new institutions or the altered functioning of existing institutions - in the family system, in the banking system, in the trading system, in the educational system, in the employment system, and so on. Indeed, it can be shown that the real need of developing countries is in institutional development (Padaki,V. & Vaz, 2003)

Shifting Paradigms

It should be clear that the approaches, programmes and strategies which are applicable to promote entrepreneurship among the more advantaged women are not likely to be applicable to less advantaged women. In a country like India, access to education, information and employment are available to the women mostly in the urban areas. The resulting "progress" in the status of urban women is very noticeable. Highly qualified women have made a mark in practically every field. They have broken their traditional boundaries, competing with their male counterparts at every stage of their career.

In our interactions with women entrepreneurs in Asia, we found the gradual shift in their roles from homemakers to earning members, from
powerlessness to states of empowerment in several spheres. However, the picture is different for poor women in states of struggle, working for survival. In the population of over one billion in India 62% live in rural areas where the literacy levels are low, and employment opportunities greatly limited. What alternatives do these poor women have to add something to their family income? Several existing institutions have recognized the task of appropriate interventions to bring these silent contributors to the Indian economy to center stage. There have been marked shifts in thinking, both at the level of policy and at the level of implementation. Since these changes in thinking reflect fundamental changes in assumptions about the nature of poverty and, therefore the development process needed, they might qualify as paradigm shifts. Box 1 outlines the observable shifts over the last thirty years from 'Exclusion of Women' to 'Inclusion of Women'.

An important strategy relevant to women emerged in the 90’s, which was of the micro-finance for poverty alleviation as well as for empowerment. The Micro Credit Summit held in Washington in 1997, created a vision of increasing numbers of women borrowers so that the global poverty alleviation programme may be speeded up. Thus the income generation activity for women through self-employment and entrepreneurship gained steady momentum. Throughout the decade there has been an increase in funding for micro finance channeled through governmental agencies and NGOs. Various studies have consistently shown that there is a higher repayment rate among women. The additional income is used for family welfare and women have a positive attitude to savings.
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<th><strong>Box I</strong></th>
<th><strong>PARADIGM SHIFTS</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Old Paradigm</strong></td>
<td><strong>New Paradigm</strong></td>
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| **Government/financial Institutions** | • Attempting only macro reforms  
• Employment generation  
• Direct lending to medium and large clients  
• Commercial criteria of viability in defining success, with limited insight into socio-economic situations.  

| **Commercial Banks** | • Did not lend to small and micro enterprises as those loans were not cost effective.  

| **International Agencies** | • Uniform approach to all development programmes.  
• Limited participation of local organizations.  

| **Trade & Commerce Institutions** | • Functioning for a smaller number of powerful individuals and organizations.  
• Policy focus limited to certain segments.  

| **NGOs** | • Welfare/charity approach to development.  
• Remained satisfied with small and direct reach.  

| **Low income women** | • Struggle for survival.  
• Feelings of powerlessness.  
• Conformity to social norms and traditions.  
• Considered as weak and helpless.  

| **Paradigm Shifts** | • Encourage creation of second tier institutions to reach micro level enterprises.  
• Promotion of self-employment through special schemes and programmes.  
• Incentives for intermediate institutions to reach large numbers of people.  
• Social criteria are integrated with commercial criteria in defining success.  

| **Commercial Banks** | • Large market opportunities recognized.  
• Organizational changes in systems to reduce costs of lending.  
• Image as socially responsible organization.  

| **International Agencies** | • Unique local context considered while designing development programmes.  
• High degree of participation of local governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as local communities.  

| **Trade & Commerce Institutions** | • Recognition of contribution of other sectors in trade and commercial activities.  
• Setting up special task forces/committees/wings/cells to reach women engaged in business.  

| **NGOs** | • Transformation in role as intermediate change agent.  
• Understanding of development and social change process  
• Approaches shifted to sustainability and all round development.  
• Organizational changes with more professionals working for NGOs.  

| **Low income women** | • Access to information improved.  
• Voice in community decision-making.  
• Active participation in economic activity.  
• Support from other women.  
• Control over money.  

| **Access to information improved.** | **Voice in community decision-making.**  
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One of the innovations to help the rural poor women has been the formation of micro level savings and credit self help groups. Women in interior and remote parts of India are encouraged by both NGOs and formal financial institutions to organize themselves into small solidarity groups that enable them to overcome the many hurdles usually faced while dealing with large formal credit agencies. Several commercial banks are now engaged in the promotion of SHGs in partnership with NGOs. Access to institutional credit for rural/poor women has helped them in two important ways:

(a) acquisition of assets and access to technology, leading to productivity enhancement and higher profit,

(b) easy and timely availability of institutional credit has helped them to escape from the clutches of exploitative moneylenders.

SHGs have acquired policy significance in many developing countries following the success of Grameen Bank of Bangladesh in adopting a group based approach to its credit and savings programmes. Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) of India has also shown the merit in the approach of getting large numbers of self employed women together to fight for their rights.

In Conclusion

The subject of entrepreneurship among Women can be examined meaningfully only by contextualizing it appropriately. In developing countries the contribution of women to the economy and to the larger developmental process in society acquires a very special significance. The experience in India and the South/East Asian region suggests that entrepreneurship avenues for women have a great potential for both the objectives above. For these objectives to be accomplished it appears important to plan and implement interventions at multiple system levels simultaneously, rather than to rely heavily on the training of entrepreneurs alone.

References


STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART: AN INTERVIEW WITH VANDANA GOPIKUMAR

LATHA NAMBIKAN

Introduction to Vandana Gopikumar

A Master’s student of Social Work, co-founded Banyan, in 1993, an NGO serving Chennai’s homeless women with mental illnesses. Here we profile Vandana’s leadership journey - starting with the urge to found an organization to translating it into reality, growing the organization and then having the confidence to let it go - Vandana has seen it all.

About the author

Principle Consultant, TOTUS Consulting

The Banyan is an organization that cares for and rehabilitates homeless women with mental illness found in the streets of Chennai. The organization provides women a safe shelter, care, medical attention and a supportive environment to enable them to recover and to take responsibility for their lives again. The group also supports the women’s return to their families and communities; when this is not possible, it supports the women in setting up new lives for themselves.

The story starts here ...

Vandana Gopikumar, a Master's student of Social Work, came across a homeless mentally ill woman in distress on the road in front of her college. With the help of a close friend, Vaishnavi Jayakumar, she tried to find shelter for the woman. Mental health institutions and NGOs were reluctant to admit the woman in desperate need of medical and psychiatric attention. Several more such encounters over the next few months left the 23-year-old women disillusioned, leading them to develop the Banyan as an NGO serving Chennai’s homeless women with mental illnesses. The organization rented a three-bedroom building to run as a care and rehabilitation centre, which they called Adaikalam (Tamil for 'home').

Since 1993, the Banyan has reached out to more than 1500 women and reunited around 850 women with their families all throughout India.

This interview profiles Vandana, who along with Vaishnavi co-founded the Banyan. Much has been written about the grit and determination of these two bold women and the catalytic events that led to the founding of the Banyan. Here we profile Vandana’s leadership journey - starting with the urge to found an organization to translating it into reality, growing the organization and then having the confidence to let it go - Vandana has seen it all.

The discussion was free flowing rather than structured, given Vandana’s natural
ebullience and passion. Through the free flow however, clearly four stages seemed to emerge - the seedling years, the founding years, the growing years and the current times.

The Seedling Years

Many of us in childhood have dreams of service, of achievement and of contribution. However, only some of us succeed in converting these dreams into reality. Was Vandana’s journey one of destiny or of design?

For Vandana, the seeds of leadership seem to have been sown far before the founding of the Banyan.

The Influencers

While Vandana claims that she was always clear and decided in her views, she also acknowledges that she was deeply inspired by her mother, who led by example with her values of equality and the urge to fight injustice. Her mother taught her self-esteem and self confidence — she treated her ideas with respect and was never condescending. In short she encouraged her in every way to “chase her dreams”.

Being the daughter of an army officer also gave Vandana the opportunity to move across the country — widening her perspective.

Vandana’s childhood memories include memories of rebellion, of struggling with the conformity expectations of education systems and of doing well only in environments that promoted creativity rather than conformity.

She also recalls her teacher at College who taught her to speak out, setting aside her preference to “feel powerful in silence”.

The Founding Years - "From Passion to Practicality"

The founding years were critical in determining the future of the Banyan.

What were the early experiments, the mental struggles that laid the foundation for what the Banyan was soon to stand for?

The first years of Banyan’s existence were years of zest, energy and positivism. The founding years were marked by four characteristics — Challenge, Energy, Learning and Getting realistic.

Challenge

The first challenges that needed to be surmounted were to do with capacity, age and background. There were internal questions within oneself as well as questions from family and friends. However these questions merely were a measure of the strength of conviction rather than deterrents. The early days also saw the convictions being severely tested as each new challenge posed itself. Funding was a mammoth problem, infrastructure was a problem, scale was a problem. The pace of growth was dictated by the external environment rather than by the choice of the founding team. However what helped was the spirit of rushing into challenges with open arms, in fact Vandana recalls that more often than not the founding team felt energised and at peace due to the challenges rather than vice versa.

Energy

Founding an organization, and most especially an NGO, calls for huge founts of energy. The inner confidence and the conviction of the leaders carried the team along. Interestingly, Vandana claims that although this was a deeply social cause, the team and she in particular were led to persevere because they sensed that this is what would give them happiness and the dogged pursuit of happiness has always been her hallmark.

Learning

The first learning Vandana talks of is learning to accept that the world is not
perfect and to adopt an attitude of "the cause is most important and anything that promotes this cause is enough. The motives of people for helping were not as important as the help they rendered. Her decisions needed to be business like rather than guided by emotions.

Another key earning was to be open to changing one's views. While initially she did not seek publicity for what she was doing but rather followed her heart's desire to "keep it quiet and this is for me" she soon realised that this was detrimental to the cause itself. Therefore one adjustment that needed to be done was that there is a need to go to town about it all — and ensure that the message of what they were trying to do reached across people — both those who need help and those who can help.

Getting Realistic

Almost overnight, the founding years saw Vandana move from being idealistic to some extent to being far more realistic - be it in terms of getting funding, infrastructure or publicity. One clear sign of getting more realistic was the realisation that the Banyan should focus on rehabilitation and encourage inmates to move out and become self-sufficient and independent at some stage if the organization has to reach more and more needy women.

The Years of Growth — Building an Institution

Clearly years 3 to 13 seem to epitomise the years of growth for the Banyan. From a leadership perspective, what were some of the challenges and the highlights of growth during this period?

Vandana sees the middle years as one of growth not just for the organization but for her own ability to balance work and life and leadership style. The challenges and achievements were therefore both on the organizational front and personal front.

Growing the Organization

Besides funding and infrastructure, a new need during the growing years was to put together and retain a committed team. Vandana recalls that a key achievement was that there was very little attrition and this provided stability. People stayed with the Banyan as much for the environment of empowerment as the reward systems (the Banyan pays "decent salaries") and the career growth possibilities. In Vandana's view, for any growing business, be it a not-for-profit organization or otherwise, these three elements may be critical to retain people.

What saw them through was also the clear demarcation of what each of the founders would do. Vandana looked after projects, advocacy and funding and infrastructure while her partner looked at Finance, HR and internal administration during these years.

Balancing Work-Life

These were the years where the founders also set up families and obviously there were demands on time on the personal front too. Vandana says what helped her was the seamlessness of both — she did not try to compartmentalise family and work but rather allowed the two to mingle with each other. This was necessary since even during these times there would be emergency calls to take up during nights, long hours at work and attention to numerous details. However, none of this really affected either her family life or her social life — she did enjoy most of the happy moments that any young householder would. Of course, like many other successful women, she subscribes to the fact that a family that supports a woman's work interests is essential for success.

On a lighter vein, Vandana adds that it is easier to run an organization from the point of view of flexibility rather than work for
one! (Perhaps this explains why there are more women entrepreneurs than women in Senior leadership positions in employment.)

**Leadership Style**

Perhaps the greatest change Vandana talks of during this phase was in her leadership style. She transitioned from an autocratic to a more democratic, inclusive style during this time. Describing her style towards the end of this period she talks of being guided by a deep sense of fairness, of fun, of learning to trust, mentoring and most importantly being “hands on” — Vandana claims that she can do and frequently does any job that anyone in the organization can do or needs to do from patient care to premises care. On arguments and conflict, Vandana agrees that given that many in the Banyan team have strong views and convictions there are disagreements — however these are openly addressed and sorted out by consensus. She personally invites feedback often.

One struggle that Vandana and perhaps many like her in the NGO Sector face is the measurability and tangibility of results. Given the importance of the cause, metrics are important. Vandana also constantly benchmarks the Banyan with other organization to take stock and make improvements.

**The Current Times - Leader to Mentor**

*Early this year, Vandana has moved out of the role of Chief Executive of the Banyan and assumed the role of Mentor. How does Vandana see this move?*

One more shift to negotiate -Vandana sees this as the shift from managing day-to-day (she assesses that during the growing years she seemed to spend approximately 70% of her time in running the organization and only 30% of her time on "the cause") to standing back and trusting others to do a good job, allowing them to make mistakes without the need to rush-in (perhaps the most difficult of all). Vandana hopes that this shift will now help her to focus on strategic visioning for the future for the Banyan, help other NGOs learn from her experience and influence the macrocosm in the interest of her cause!

*Vandana carries success easily on confident shoulders. There is a sense of someone who has lived life well, a life worth having lived, and as she says “few regrets”.*
What do Indra Nooyi, Kalpana Moraparia, and Naina Lal Kidwai have in common? They are all women leaders who have broken through the proverbial, yet a very real glass ceiling in the corporate world to reach the top.

However, it would be premature to celebrate the end of male domination in our society in general, and in the corporate world, in particular. Survey after survey has shown that despite an increasing participation of women in organized sector, they still represent only around a
third of the workforce. Clearly, it is just not a matter of breaking the glass ceiling — the barriers of entry and subsequent retention exist at all levels. And, this is what needs to be addressed.

Before we discuss what these barriers and roadblocks are, it is perhaps important to point out why we feel that an increasing participation of women in the corporate sector is a goal worth striving for. The fact that this goal is desirable from a societal point of view is obvious, but, there is another aspect which is being increasingly recognized in corporate boardrooms — having a more gender-diverse workforce and leadership makes eminent business sense.

**Diversity - The Need**

Ever since Darwin, we know that diversity in a species is the key to natural selection. The more diverse the gene pool, the better equipped the species is to adapt to the environmental challenges. In much the same way, it is now clear that diversity of ideas in a corporate environment leads to better business decisions and hence business performance. Almost all successful global companies realize this and hence place great emphasis on diversity. It follows that the most elementary diversity is gender diversity. Since women make up half the population, taking them on board increases viewpoints and generation of ideas many fold.

But apart from this statistical reason, there are several other factors why women's contribution is crucial to business performance. Studies have shown that women are far more adept at handling difficult situations and adjusting rapidly to the environment. This is, of course, completely contrary to the stereotypical image of women not being able to manage stress. Women are adept at taking quick decisions, handling employees, and more comfortable with diversity of any kind. This, of course, is a great asset in a global environment. Multitasking might have entered the business jargon fairly recently, but for women, it has always been a way of life. Whether it is the manufacturing sector or the services sector, women have consistently shown themselves to be assets in organizations they work for.

A booming economy, a huge and growing urban middle class and an enormous increase in educational opportunities have all led to a larger number of women entering the workforce. Changing attitudes and growth of education has meant that women are increasingly no longer content to be homemakers while their male partners are the bread-earners. More and more women are now getting employment — either because of economic pressures that demand a two-income household, or due to aspirational reasons of increasing consumption. Interestingly, even where there is no economic necessity, women are seeking financial independence, which they see as an important attribute to their existence.

Of course, there is still much to be done - at the societal and the corporate level to bring a more balanced gender ratio in the workforce at all levels. For this, it is important to be sensitive to the problems faced by women, not only as employees, but women qua women — the problems are real, though frequently 'invisible'.

**Creating a Homely Environment**

One of the characteristics of our urban society is that it is a society in transition. At the family level, joint families are no longer the norm. However, at a societal level, we are far from providing the support structures needed for nuclear families. Creches, day boarding and child-care facilities are all sadly lacking in our cities. In the absence of an extended family
to take care of the children, women frequently leave their jobs when they start their families. Companies could provide the physical infrastructure to enable women to continue with their careers.

In addition, it is also critical for women to feel safe and secure in their workplace. Apart from the physical infrastructure, it is also important to provide more flexible and gender-inclusive policies to foster growth of women workforce. Strict policies for dealing with sexual harassment in all its forms are fast becoming the norm in most companies. These need to be strengthened, and well publicized. It is not just enough to have policies but also to ensure that women have the comfort level and confidence to speak out against any harassment they face. Companies need to evolve mechanisms to engender this feeling with support groups, counselors and other semi formal structures.

Long leaves of absence without detriment to their career growth, sensitive and flexible transfer policies, counseling services, are some of the features that will make women more comfortable in the workplace and hence more productive. Of course, being sensitive to these issues should not mean that women should be placed at a disadvantage when it comes to making decisions about their suitability for certain positions.

**Bridging the Gap with Technology**

Technology can play a major role in providing a more conducive environment for women. With the growth of telecommunications and connectivity, working from home or having flexible working hours is a real possibility. These can provide women with an opportunity to contribute while not feeling pressured about the situation at home.

Our experience of introducing some of these initiatives in IT & ITES organizations have resulted in retention, high motivation, and improved productivity. Though there is much more that can be done, early successes indicate that there is merit in replicating this to a larger scale. The beauty of these practices is that these have helped a much larger employee base than just women. Child-care facilities, counseling, mentoring, specialized training interventions, flexible work practices have been used by both men and women employees in equal measure thereby doubling our business benefits.

**Organic Leadership**

The rise of global leaders like Indra Nooyi, Kalpana Morapariya, and Naina Lal Kidwai is of course laudable. Every such achievement by women is in itself worthy of praise since they provide role models for others. However, it is important to realize that companies need to foster an environment to enable organic leadership from amongst their women employees. Organically grown leadership, not just at the top levels, but at all levels, will lead to more diversity in thought and organization which will ultimately add to the growth in quantitative and qualitative terms while also fulfilling an important societal responsibility.
MEN AND WOMEN BOSSES — TWO DIFFERENT ANIMALS?

LAVANYA JAYARAM S

Abstract

Gender diversity in work groups and organizations is a pertinent issue, with increasing number of women entering the working population across various fields more than ever before. As women enter the global workforce in greater numbers, they will most likely be participating more actively at all levels of organizations, and work groups will become much more gender-balanced. There is thus a need to examine the implications of gender diversity on work groups in organizations and to find ways in which these teams can be made more successful. So here’s an exploration into certain stereotypes and how they are fast fading to create a new genre of gender agnostic leadership.

About the author

Lavanya Jayaram S, Principal Innovation Evangelist, heads the Corporate Innovation Group at Zensar and is a keen Marketing Communication professional.

Gender diversity in work groups and organizations is a pertinent issue, with increasing number of women entering the working population across various fields more than ever before. As women enter the global workforce in greater numbers, they will most likely be participating actively at all levels of organizations, and work groups will become much more gender-balanced. There is thus a need to examine the implications of gender diversity on work groups in organizations and to find ways in which these teams can be made more successful.

And while working in diverse groups is complex, the dynamics get even more complicated with one gender reporting to the other. So the various combinations we would have under observation for our topic are man reporting to a woman; woman reporting to a woman; man reporting to man and a woman reporting to a man. Archaic social constructs have made some equations more easily managed than the others, which are typically, the man reporting to man and woman reporting to man. In these two scenarios any conflict that might arise has generally got nothing to do with gender. It is when the other two erstwhile unusual patterns come into play is when complexities begin on the basis of gender.

Stereotypical Men and Women at the Workplace

Before delving any further into the subject an apology on introducing the stereotypical man and woman at the workplace is due. For the purpose of this observation we will need to allow for some massive generalizations at the cost of
individualism. There is of course far too much left to assumption when we build stereotypes, but there are patterns of behavior that are characteristic of certain types and classes of people in certain situations that are observed very often and are useful to ascertain predictability.

Everyone agrees that all relationships need management and that is of course true even for a boss-junior relationship. There are egos to manage, sensitivities to handle, conflicts to resolve, disagreements to express and sometimes even emotions to vent - all with one participant in this duo at a superior position which adds that additional intricacy to the relationship. As most often we don’t choose our bosses, it is a relationship one spends the better part of the day ‘managing’. We only choose to leave them and that I say alluding to the famous line oft quoted by HR folk on attrition, “people really join the organization for what it stands for and stay with it or leave it because of the manager”. The manager plays a key role in the motivation of the junior and has a huge responsibility on his/her shoulders to keep the team chugging.

There are numerous barriers that could come to play in this relationship which could be a complete lack of sync in wavelength, difference in priorities, an alternate decision making approach, varying standards of quality or ethics or even simply differing taste in things. This lack of connect could be disastrous for the relationship and thus for productivity of output as a team.

The barrier of gender stereotypes causes a lot of conflict especially in societies that have had the backdrop of a patriarchal structure. These societies take naturally to a male leader and a woman on top is often a reason for great discomfort. In a society and culture where the first image for a head of the family is still a male there is no reason to be astonished that civilized and progressive people, even otherwise evolved business leaders could engage in hours of debate on how a woman president for the a super power may not be a good idea for the global environment given the erratic nature of women’s emotional construct.

Getting a little deeper into the stereotypes; the stereotype defines that, men as bosses are professional: keeping business restricted to business, terse in their interactions, take easier to leadership roles with a natural penchant to dominate conversations, opinions etc. Men are not popular for their emotion-handling ability at the workplace and are known to be more sub-zero by nature. Their quiet resolve makes them more effective and unbiased in decision making.

Women on the other hand are the natural emotional resort for the group for their traits of patience and thus easily slip into the role of ‘office mom’. Women are seen as nurturing the group with love and affection and thus through an emotional bond taking the team along. The woman herself today hides under the shelter of a previously established stereotype. She is inhibited in her curiosity, asks fewer questions and probably sits back and thinks that there is no need to be vocal and dominating in expression. She could keep all her intrusions in the Boardroom for a state of having collected all her thoughts. Only when she has completely crystallized the idea, she finally talks. Unfortunately, her male counterparts are not used to taking her seriously. The average woman, in the context of work very naturally accepts staying at the periphery of matters instead of getting to the heart of action.

For some women, the heart of action is interpreted as a more of a stretched attempt to perform and thus driving an ‘imbalance’ on the work-life front. Work-life balance is
one of the most overrated concerns expressed by women, is the essential divide that continues to keep the woman a tad away from the position of the leading man, no matter what business suit is donned and how short the haircut of the woman or any other physical parity achieved. The occurrence of a man raising the same concern is almost zilch even today. One may argue that the biological divide would extend into the workplace and will always keep this fundamental difference in the two genders, at work too. But by bringing that differential into the work sphere a woman is pitching herself that much short of the target.

My essential view on the theme of work-life balance is that you would only think about it when you are doing something you are not really passionate about. If you are passionate about work, just as you are to tending to your child there is no balance that you will strive to achieve. You will make all necessary plans with equal gusto and there is found the illusive balance that everyone seems to chase.

Changing Trends

It is heartening of course to see the changing trend where men and women are competing for the same pie in the sky; are as aggressive and neither expects the other to pick up the tab at the Hotel, nor opens the door to cars or gives the first opportunity to walk into elevators. Women even dress like the people who share the boardroom space with them. If it is a formal business meeting with a client – it is business suits all the way for women and men, stating boldly and visibly that there is no reason to distinguish the participants of the group for any other reason than the quality of inputs to the discussion.

An interesting observation made by a friend, and there may be good reason to believe it is true, is that men who have girl children make better managers. Managing women’s emotional needs and generally having a close understanding of the way a woman thinks perhaps develops an understanding of certain unique needs that women may have.

Here I end my update on what my perceptions of the stereotypes of men and women in the corporate context are. In my 7 years of having worked with various interesting people none have themselves conformed to any of the above fixed patterns. It is a matter of good fortune as it has helped me retain my opinion against stereotypes and also consolidated my opinion on gender parity. I have always had bosses that believed in women’s capabilities as corporate performers and treated them as assets, and have all been balanced in giving opportunities to women for positions of leadership. No chauvinists for me – thank you!

High strung emotions, the crown jewel of a woman in the business scenario, have been a trait of one of my male bosses. Then on the flip side I also had a woman boss who ensured that commitments are cast in stone, and if that had to be done no matter how late at night it took to get that task done, she would ensure the team delivered – and no questions asked on how the girl in the team would get home late at night – those were incidentals which people needed to figure out for themselves as adults. I think that’s fair as long as there is enough time and notice for an individual to plan. No fussy mother-like female boss here or an impenetrable male mind who is a mystery to be unraveled like most people of the other gender tend to be.

And the quintessence of my story is that there may be some people who have predictable patterns like a large number of people in a manufacturing company. One could have betted on how long (or little) I would stay in the organization as
otherwise most other girls came in as officer trainees from college and would serve a stint until they got hitched and were away. I have heard of extremely slow career paths for unmarried young girls in organizations. They were always perceived as a temporary member of the organization and would only be part of project based work and no real long term profiles with a career path were given. Tragic but changing, as many women have proven that they were there for a career! Much lies in the hands of the woman to mean business from day one. Whether that is by de-gendering (not the right word I am sure) oneself or stating in every way that there is a considerable contribution that could be made if only the person removed the gender tinted glasses.

It is essential to tear down stereotypes, although there is typical behaviour that can be associated to a certain gender. But just as we do it we are reiterating the stereotypes for many more years to come and are making it that much more difficult to build new robust and balanced molds for the men and women of today. What seems to have worked in the global leadership context has been the male stereotype. Women are increasingly making themselves more masculine to be quickly accepted as one of the boys and thus more acceptable as a candidate for leadership positions. What I previously called de-gendering fits in and maybe it is the right thing to do!

One key to working well with any boss has been a proper understanding of his/her likes, dislikes, temperament and style. The boss’s temperament and style of working should be well understood in order to work compatibly. To function according to his/her preferences, find out what your boss is finicky about and make sure you are extra careful about such issues. Emphasize what your boss thinks is a priority and downplay the rest. If he is a person who is organized and orderly, he will expect you to be the same. If he is slipshod, he is probably a person who is more concerned on meeting deadlines. Fit yourself to your boss’ requirements and try to live up to his expectations, and all this by never altering one’s own identity. There is no point in defaming one’s own personality to morph into a likeable junior.

Some people tend to understand their own gender better than the opposite sex, and some of course otherwise – and the ease or complexity in managing bosses essentially is a function of this understanding. And if you were expecting to have ten mantras to handling your female boss by reading this article, we’ve got a long journey ahead! You would have unraveled one woman stereotype and just as you would have cracked that one – another would have emerged. The secret is to understand dynamics of human relationships – to always deliver and by keeping it simple.
ARE WOMEN REALLY TREATED EQUALLY IN ORGANIZATIONS?

AQUIL BUSRAI

About the author

Aquil Busrai is Executive Director of Human Resources, IBM India. He is the National President of National HRD Network and a Fellow of All India Management Association. He is a product of XLRI, Jamshedpur.

Take a journey back to India, year 1998 … a popular business magazine carried on its cover India’s top CEOs during the previous year. Result of a nation-wide survey. Worthy names — but no women. Another business magazine proudly announced its own selection of the outstanding CEO during last year, as it did every year — no women! At that time if you had asked an executive to name five prominent women business leaders — chances are it would have taken some time before an answer was provided.

Transport back to India, year 2008 … Naina Lal Kidwai, Vinita Bali, Kiran Shaw Mazumder, Anu Agha, Renu Karnad and a few more have brought women leadership to forefront: by any standard, outstanding leaders themselves. But does this really indicate improvement of women’s lot in corporate world?

The Issue is, Are Women Really Treated Equally in Organizations?

Most organizations like to believe, or at least claim, that they offer women equal opportunity. These organizations talk about perplexingly high turnover of women employees and the messy details about balance between career and family responsibilities faced by women. Then they safely conclude that time is not ripe for them to take any bold decision in consciously creating an environment where women talent can be fully utilized.

These organizations are missing a huge opportunity. In fact, because they fundamentally misunderstand how to manage and motivate one half of the human resource, they tap only a fraction of the resource capacity. A conspiracy of silence prevents discussing the matter openly. However, you cannot fix a problem that you tacitly avoid talking about.

The solution is fundamental change in accepting women as business imperative. It is not only the right thing to do, but more important, it makes good economic sense. Imagine for a moment, that you were not considering human resources policies but were instead attending a presentation from your R&D team about a spectacular new product. This product, which has been under development for years, is now nearing completion. If its introduction succeeds — and you believe that it will — your revenues will sky rocket. Wouldn’t you react impatiently after that meeting ended, eager to get cracking? Treating women as business imperative is the equivalent of a unique R&D product for which there is a huge demand. It makes good economic and business sense.
The liberalization and expansion of economy has resulted in a rapid growth in the demand for managerial talent. At the same time, with the demographic changes in most countries, a large number of talented and career-oriented women are entering the employment market each year. Despite these facts, organizations hesitate to hire women in large numbers, mainly because they have not come to terms with their deeply rooted misconceptions about women employees.

Even where women managers are recruited, their upward movement in the organization is rather stunted when compared to their male counterparts. Take for instance a typical company pyramid. It is a geometric truth that if you divide a pyramid into four slices of equal heights, the top slice will contain 1.5% of its volume, the next slice will contain 11%, the third slice will contain 29.5% and the bottom layer will contain 58%. Take a critical look at presence of women in an organization’s pyramid. Chances are you will find most of them in the third or even the fourth slice. If the top two layers continue to be almost exclusively male domains then the segregation invariably denies the organization access to capable women talent at senior level.

Women are as strong in basic leadership traits like intelligence, energy and analytical ability, as men are, because organizations use the same exacting standards while recruiting them, as they do for hiring a male manager. Yet, women, often, languish in these organizations after they are hired.

**How is an Organization Hurt?**

Organization is not mobilizing its best people at the top. Any successful business today is only as good as its senior management team is. Traditionally, top professional companies have confined their hiring to the top 10 percentile of the talent, say in any business schools. This meant selective recruitment of mainly male students at elite business schools. However, today women have displaced men in these schools where you will find that nearly half the class consists of women. Look at the top ten percentile of the performers and you will find majority is women. Thus if an organization depends solely on male graduates, they would have drastically reduced the pool from where to draw top talent.

Organization is not maintaining quality at every level. With competition becoming global and more intense, companies vie with each other in every sizeable industry and in every market that offers promise. Products grow more and more sophisticated each day. Technology grows more complex. Managerial talent, therefore, essentially has to be the very best.

If women are hired in critical management positions, organizations can enhance the quality of its people talent at every level by identifying and promoting the best women instead of benignly ignoring them after they are hired.

Unless one actively draws from the entire universe of people with high potential including women candidates, organizations will hurt themselves in long term.

**Organization is Treating a Portion of Its Employees as Dead Weight**

While some organizations have accepted women in their management teams, most women managers are at the bottom of the pyramid or worse still, shunted off to the sides. These organizations are hiring and training women, at times, to pay lip service to equality between the sexes but unconsciously sabotaging that very equality through their apathy.
Organization is Putting Lid on the Contribution Individual Women Can Make

People feel stifled when they report to less talented bosses. Many women managers, who occupy the sides and the bottom of the organizational chart, often work for men who are less talented than they are. Their talent and vision are constrained by the limitations of the less-competent men to whom they report. A person who works for someone less competent is stunted and thwarted by that relationship. The capable but under-appreciated subordinate soon realizes that recognition for effort is not commensurate with output and that the rewards for her work are not inter-linked with her potential. The results are predictable: the more talented subordinate throttles down, loses interest, produces less or finally leaves. Inequity of this kind has fiscal costs. The organization suffers from decreased productivity and inefficiency.

With each step backwards, women managers are further de-motivated and attrition among high-potential women increases. This, in some way, may explain the over-representation of talented women entrepreneurs. Some of the best women set out to work for themselves in a supportive environment of their own creation - where talent is recognized and rewarded.

Organizations are Wasting Recruiting and Training Money

On an average, professionally qualified women managers postpone the birth of their first child until they are 30 years old. If a woman manager were to join at the age of 23, the organization would have made at least 7 years commitment to her training and development. If she were to leave the organization when her first child is born - possibly because parental-leave provisions are inadequate in the organization — the organization would have failed to amortize that 7-year investment. It would be worst, and ironical, if she were to leave and work for a competitor.

Organization is Failing to Create Beacons For the Best Women Talent Entering the Market

If organizations hire women managers as a last resort, it is shortsighted. Organizations that do not care to develop and retain talented women will continue to feel the absence of women at higher levels in the future, when talents will be scarcer. Talented women graduating from best schools will scout out their employment prospects, searching for the right beacons. Organizations that fail to develop women for leadership positions now will be constrained to settle later for women who are not as talented, thus losing the vital competitive edge.

Is There a Need to Change?

The biggest obstacle to any corporate change is the reluctance of leaders to see the need for this change. When an organization acknowledges and accepts that women should be full participants in the management of the organization, implementing a solution is neither difficult nor expensive.

One can visualize at least four actions that an organization should take to ensure that the women managers would function as effectively as their male counterparts. First, is to acknowledge the fundamental biological fact of maternity. Second, is to provide flexibility for working parent, both women and men. Third, is to provide women who already have basic leadership traits with additional management skills and tools that will contribute to enhanced performance. Fourth, is to improve the corporate environment by removing
barriers that exist for women but not for men.

**Acknowledge Motherhood**

The fact that women managers have babies does not alter their commitment to a job or the quality of their work. What discourages the expectant mother is the attitude of other people in the workplace? An organization that handles the matter sensitively by providing adequate and sensible maternity leave and parental-leave policy will retain their best women managers. This will inspire their confidence and win their commitment. Organizations will earn loyalty of the women manager at a time when loyalty is a vanishing corporate virtue.

**Provide Flexibility**

Organizations need to accept parenthood as part of business. They need to move with the times and permit re-entry of women managers after they have had their stint in raising the children. With the advent of technology, organizations should be flexible to permit new parent from working at home. Organizations should take advantage of technology, of telecommuting etc and learn how to measure real productivity, instead of counting hours spent at the office.

**Provide Training**

Since progressive organizations aim to hire the best talent, both men and women, they should recognize that women face a tougher challenge than men do after they join the male-dominated organization. Training, educating and nurturing women managers will ensure their accelerated growth after they have become comfortable in the workplace.

**Improve the Environment**

Glass ceiling for women managers is an attitudinal hurdle. Organizations need to provide same challenging assignment to women, as men, which will tax them, stretch their potential and also provide a learning platform.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, that there is a need to re-visit the issue of opportunities for women managers is rather obvious. The moot point is whether organizations are ready to change? If the status quo continues unchallenged, organizations may miss a mine of untapped women talent.

_In that case, we will remain where we are now, where it is not working. We will perpetuate the conspiracy of silence. Everybody will know it, but nobody will be talking about it._
GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND SELF CONCEPT: 
A RESEARCH REPORT

SURABHI PUROHIT

Abstract

The present study was conducted to examine the perceived gender discrimination and self-concept of adolescents. The sample was drawn from five government girls’ senior secondary schools. 300 students were selected as subjects. The study was conducted with the help of two standardized tools. The results of the study reveal parents with higher androgyny behavior are found to have daughters with higher self-concept. Girls with lower level of self-concept perceive more gender discrimination in their family.

About the author

Dr. Surabhi Purohit, Ph.D. is teaching (Human Development) at University of Rajasthan, Jaipur for last 21 years. She is the Vice-President of NHRD, Jaipur Chapter. She has been keenly involved in researches in different areas like parenting, emotional intelligence, young and old children. She has a number of books published to her credit which include books like Effective parenting and Enhancing personal effectiveness-training instruments for parents, teachers and students published by Tata McGraw Hill.

Introduction

Parents play the central role in their children’s development and are their main educators (Wolfendale, 1993). The voice of parents is the voice of God to their children. Shakespeare once said, “Parents are heaven’s lieutenants”. So parents’ role is very important in the child’s life (Silverberg and Steinberg, 1990). If a right kind of training has been imparted to him, the child becomes the harbinger of joy and happiness for his parents as well as for his nation (Rani, 1994). On the other hand, if his training has been ignored at all, he is almost sure to get unhappiness and disappointment (Garbarino et al., 1994).

Adolescence is labeled as a period of great stress, storm, strain and strife. When the adolescent girls in India are subjected to various types of discriminatory practices and when various steps are being taken to change the status of women and girls, many girls are getting non-discriminatory environment. Girls differ in their family environment and the discriminatory practices they are subjected to. Further effects of these differential discriminatory practices along with the stress and storm of their period must be dependent upon how they perceive these practices used in their family. These perceived familial gender discriminatory practices must be a result of parental transactional styles and sex-role stereotypes, influencing the psyche of the adolescent girls. The present study aims to investigate the effect of parental styles and androgyny on gender discrimination, self-concept.

Discrimination between man and woman is one of the crucial disparities in many societies, and this is particularly so in India.
This is reflected not only in such matters as education and opportunity to develop talents but also in the more elementary field of nutrition education and survival (Sen 1984). Obvious disparities exist in the overall status of men and women, girls and boys.

Saraswati and Gaur (1981) defined self-concept as the individual’s way of looking at himself. It also signifies his way of thinking, feeling and behaving.

Sharma (1996) in her study reported that the adolescent girls communicated their awareness and resentment of being second to male children. Majority of girls reported that there were differences in the way daughters and sons were brought up in their own homes and in most other families.

Gender discrimination is also found to be another serious cause of lower educational status of girls in India. Self-concept is an agent that influences self-control (Hay, 2000). Individuals with low levels of self-control have lower levels of "ego-strength" display lower levels of delayed gratification, are less tolerant to frustrations, and are more impulsive (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990).

In view of the above points, the need was felt to investigate the relationship of adolescent girl’s experienced gender discrimination and self-concept.

**Material and Methods**

**Subjects:** A sample, 300 adolescent girl students of IXth grade were taken for the present investigation. For the purpose of the present study, the population of interest is adolescent girl students.

**Tools:** The study was conducted with the help of following tools:

**Procedure of Data Collection**

After deciding the scales to be used for the research purpose, help from the school authorities was sought, to seek facilities and co-operative during the data collection. Then the investigation was conducted in the groups of 40-50 subjects in the school.

First, the rapport was established with the subjects and they were assured that the results would be kept confidential, but the general purpose of the research was not disclosed. Taking into consideration their convenience, days were fixed up for the administration of the standardised tools. On the scheduled dates, tools were administered. Standard instructions as per the manual were given to the subjects before administering the tools. It was also made sure that the subjects were seated comfortably. Researcher was personally present to remove any doubt or suspicion thereby, removing any bias due to misinterpretation of words used.

**Results and Discussion**

Correlation results regarding total self-concept and gender discrimination have been presented in Table 1

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Perceived familial gender discrimination has significant negative correlation with total self-concept. Its coefficient of correlation has been found to be $r = -0.26$ ($p<0.01$).

This proposes that when adolescent girls possess high self-concept, their sense to compete increases, which results in high achievement. On the other hand, if they perceive more gender discrimination at home they are more likely to develop lower self-concept.

Kremer and Walberg (1981) examined thirteen studies in which home environment variables were related to child’s self-concept and self esteem. The results of these studies indicate that high and favourable attitudes and interests among children. These children carry healthy academic as well as temperamental self concepts and react positively with frustration and anxiety.

Positive parent child relationship helps in developing attitude, which can boost the self-concept of a child (Kim, 1996). Singh and Singh (1986) revealed that self-concept is more positive in normal and encouraging discipline styles than in harsh and punitive discipline. If one of the parents are discouraging, overprotective, excessively critical or demanding, children may came to believe that they are incapable, inadequate or inferior. However, If parents encourage children’s move towards self-reliance and accept and love their children, when they make mistakes, children will learn to accept themselves and will be on their way of developing healthy self-concept (Fincham and O’ Leary, 1996).

Nirmaldeep (1983) and Kalra (1992) found in their study that parental behaviour is the main force running through the family relationship and home environment. Self concept does not grow in a vacuum, parental style seems to be the major factor, which affects the self-concept of the children.

Kagitcibasi (1982) did a study on the value of children and gender preference, and concluded that reasons for wanting a son are more varied than those wanting a daughter. One of the reason is masculine behavioural attitude of both the parents others are as old age security of parents by the son, carrying on family name, financial and practical health while young and companionship and love such parental attitudes explain why boys often receive greater opportunities than girls.

Sharma (1996) in her study reported that the girls communicated their awareness and resentment of being second to male children. A majority of girls reported that there were differences in the way daughters and sons were brought up in their own homes and in most other families.

Most of the girls reported that there were more restrictions placed on them as compared to boys. While hardly any checks were placed on boys, girls were not allowed freedom of movement. Boys could go anywhere and return late without causing much annoyance to their parents. The one of the reasons for these gender discrimination was found to be believe in male supremacy among parents.

Tonnies and Tausch (1980) explored dimensions of parents behaviour and variables of children’s psychic health during adulthood. Results showed that subjects who perceived their parents as significantly accepting, warm, genuine, facilitatively non-directively active or as little directive, feminine or androgynous had significantly more favourable rates of psychic health as compared to subjects.
with less favourable and masculine parent behaviour, parents favourable attitudes were positively associated with their androgynous beliefs.

Dombrose (1955); Bledstone and Wiggins (1973), indicated that adolescents who had been understood by their parents, had better self image on the facts of academic adequacy than misunderstood adolescents. Less appreciation from the parents resulted in school dislike on the part of the children (Minsel and Fittcan, 1971)

Suman and Umapadhy (1997), examined the relationship between academic achievement and parent child relationship in adolescent. The sample consisted of 219 IX standard students. Results revealed that academic motivation was higher when adolescents perceived their parents as loving and demanding the adolescent girls show higher academic motivation, when the parents are perceived as less neglecting, followed by perception of parents as loving and demanding. The achievement motivation declines when parents are perceived as rejecting and less loving. The lowest achievement motivation has been found in girls who perceive their parents as neglecting or discriminating.

Golombok et al. (1995) examined the quality of parenting and found out that mothers had more warm relationship with their children, they were having high emotional involvement with their children as compared to fathers. It has been also found that mother-child interaction was significantly more as compared to father child interaction.

This proposes that when adolescent girls possess high self concept, their sense to compete increases, which results in high achievement. On the other hand, if they perceive more gender discrimination at home they are more likely to develop lower self concepts.

This proposed that adolescent girls perceive lesser gender discrimination in their family if their fathers seems to possess supportive and innovative style of living, as in these cases, fathers effective styles of dealing with their daughter play a contributory role in providing them a free and stimulating familial atmosphere.

REFERENCES


MEN ONLY ...

ANJALI RAINA

Abstract

Mens Clubs and Corporate Institutions: Anjali raina draws a parallel between the two, analyzes how the roles women have played as leaders have evolved and examines what’s imperative for industry going forward.

About the author

Anjali Raina is Executive Director of the Harvard Business School India Research Center in Mumbai. Prior to this she was with Citigroup India and held most recently the designation of Country Training Director for the Global Consumer Group. Prior to this she worked at ANZ Grindlays Bank. Anjali holds an MBA from IIM Calcutta.

Men only”. This was the sign that you saw in many of the clubs in Calcutta in the 70’s, restricting access to areas where men retired to do “men only” things. Lesser mortals like women could only speculate about what happened in those hallowed precincts. Eventually of course all that changed, with some clubs now even permitting (horror of horrors!) WOMEN MEMBERS in to their own right, not as wives and daughters. In the next few pages I will draw a parallel between the Corporate scenario and these male bastions, analyze how the roles women play here have evolved over the years, and examine what’s the imperative for Industry going forward.

Corporate Landscape Ten Years Ago

The corporate landscape that I entered 10 years later, in many ways mirrored the "men only" bastions that I saw as a child. In the early 80’s, Women were in a minority; in one branch office that I worked in there were only two women in an office of 500! One was a clerk, the widow of a man who had died in service, and the other was me, a freshly minted MBA, the youngest in the office, and the boss of a 40 member team. In office you felt all eyes were on you, not in a nasty or demeaning way, just as a curiosity-"what's she doing here?" When I took over as Branch Manager Customers would routinely ask me to direct them to the Manager, and refuse to believe that I was She.

India by then had a woman Prime Minister, but the corporate world was still a male preserve. Recruitment Panels were comprised of men who believed that women were looking at a stop gap between education and marriage. The corner offices of law firms, consulting and accounting firms, FMCG companies and pharmaceutical concerns were populated by men, and even industries like Public Sector Banks and advertising, which were considered women friendly, had only one Chief Executive each who was a woman-Tarjani Vakil and Tara Sinha. There were
no women role models in the corporate landscape, because there weren't any women.

20 Years On ...

20 years on, much has changed. In India, across sectors, women occupy the top slot, or occupy seats in the boardroom. Naina Lal Kidwai, Renuka Ramnath, Chanda Kochar, Falguni Nayar, Meera Sanyal and Manisha Girotra in Banking, Kiran Majumdar Shaw and Anu Aga in Industry, Anjali Bansal and Sonal Agarwal in Executive Search, Shobana Bhartia and Zarina Screwala in Media, Rama Bijarpurkar in Consulting, the list is endless. Fortune Magazine’s 2007 list of the world’s most powerful women in Global Business shows the rise of women in areas like mining, nuclear energy, telecom, oil, gambling, and in countries like Saudi Arabia, which have traditionally been male dominated. (Some examples- Cynthia Carroll, CEO Anglo American, Britain; Linda Cook, Executive director, Gas and Power, Royal Dutch Shell, Netherlands; Lubna Olayan, CEO Olayan Financing, Saudi Arabia; Pansy Ho, Managing director, Shun Tak Holdings, HK.; Indra Nooyi, Chairman and CEO PepsiCo, USA. Oprah Winfrey Entrepreneur, USA) everywhere you look women role models abound. Young girls have a plethora of opportunities to choose from.

Women in corporate leadership positions are shining. In a few cases lineage and legacy have played a part in their rise, but in most cases they have been chosen because they were the best man (oops, person) for the job. Each one has faced challenges, brought vision, charisma and a fresh approach to old problems. At Xerox you hear of the extraordinary story of two female leaders, Anne Mulcahy and Ursula Burns who saved Xerox in a historic turnaround, and are now dealing with the issue of Mulcahy handing over power to Ursula — perhaps a first where a woman is ready to take over from another woman in a publicly held firm.

Yet statistics tell a different story. Women form a greater part of the corporate workforce than ever before, and populate the junior and middle management rungs of the corporate ladder. But those perched on the top of the ladder, with designations like Chairman, President, CEO, and COO, — the slots with the real authority, fancy pay packages and true leadership opportunities are few and far between. Nor is this an Indian Phenomenon alone. In the Fortune 500 companies only 1% (7 out of the 500) have women CEO’s. Only 6% of the most highly paid executives are women, and only 15% of the seats on the Boards of directors are held by women. (Source: Women in the labyrinth of Leadership, HBR Sep 2007, Alice H Eagly and Linda L Carli).

Let's Examine Why Some Make It, and Many Don't

The first issue of course is that the corporate world did start of as a man’s world, and hence the rules of engagement are defined by men, for men. The job requirements in the corporate world require a certain degree of face time, the hidden assumption being that the more time you put in, the more committed you are. As one woman bitterly described it, —" I do double the work in half the time, spend all my time at work working rather than taking smoking breaks, and because I leave punctually at six pm, I am seen as watching the clock ! " The rules of engagement assume that when you hire one — the male employee, you get his wife for free ... she manages the family, offers a sympathetic ear to the husband's trials and tribulations, and even entertains colleagues. Gitanjali Prasad, author of the ‘Great Indian family’ talks
about the fact that the reality is that most successful women arrive with two free appendages — the mother and the mother-in-law. In my own case I had a fantastic support system — a devoted maid, a wonderful Aunt who still juggles my responsibilities and a supportive mother and mother in law who would fly across the country to handle my household in a crisis. It's only with this support system, and a caring and considerate husband that a woman can even hope to put in the hours, effort and sheer energy that the corporate world demands. Not surprisingly, many women at the top, in the past, used to be single.

In addition to the overt demand for demonstrated commitment in the shape of long hours, willingness to travel, relocate and generally subordinate one’s life to the Institution is the second issue — the covert and hidden assumptions about the way the different genders are supposed to behave. The unspoken assumptions about the roles that the different genders are supposed to play, the behaviors they are expected to exhibit, and the attributes that are acceptable are so deeply ingrained that they cross cultures, are imbedded in mindsets, not just of the men, but also of the women. The old joke — if a man speaks his mind he is assertive, if a woman does so she is overbearing, and so on has actually been borne out by research which shows that gender bias is deeply ingrained. Since leadership roles were traditionally occupied by men, the traits associated with leadership — assertion and control are seen as male traits, while women are expected to be more nurturing, soft-spoken and empathetic. A woman who tries to play the role of a corporate leader and displays the more masculine traits grates on the environment. If she behaves like a 'woman' is supposed to, she may face the criticism that she doesn’t have what it takes to do the top job.

Thirdly, balancing the dual responsibility of home and office, societal expectations of child bearing and rearing, while over compensating for the demands at work, are more likely to be faced by the woman, in a dual career family. While the share of men in house work has risen globally, it is still less than that of a woman, and in India it remains largely the woman's arena. This creates a sort of a societal pressure that builds a “guilt syndrome” into women, especially those with young children, where they feel that by being away from home, they are being neglectful of their primary role, for their own “selfish” gratification. Hence talented and achievement oriented women tend to be torn between fulfilling their career ambitions and being the perfect “mother, helpmate or homemaker”. What they tend to sacrifice are what is seen as the “fun” part of the job — the parties, the travel, the socializing, but this sacrifice denies them the opportunity to build the professional networks that are the hidden corridors of power in these male bastions.

In such a scenario, the women who do navigate this slippery ladder successfully usually deliver results that are externally validated — they have customers who swear by them, deliver numbers that outpace others, strike deal after deal which others cannot do, in other words the evidence of their talent and capability is so overwhelming that it cannot be refuted. Gender bias is so deeply ingrained that it requires a woman to do far more to receive the same recognition that a man does. Popular movies like Chak De are only metaphors for the reality.

**Building Personal Credibility**

In addition to merit, competence and capability, building their personal credibility in the environment, creating an external network of clients, well wishers...
and admirers, is one skill which successful women usually have. It's as if these women have decided that since navigating the internal networks is so slippery, they will use the environment to create the network that is needed.

The third very important lever to catapult women to the top echelons of the corporate hierarchy is the appropriate nurturing environment. Acceptance of the need for flexibility to deal with familial responsibilities, support services for emergencies, a results focus rather than the need for face time, Mentoring, Coaching, ... the list is endless, but marked by one clear common factor - work environments that are meritocracies, competitive and challenging, but still great places to work for BOTH men and women. Where the work environment is not fulfilling, women are likely to exercise their choice, (and woman after woman has told me they are so grateful that gender bias gives them this choice) to take a break. Statistics show that those who perch on the top of the corporate ladder reach that perch because they steadily climbed the rungs, without pausing for breath, or allowing others to overtake them, i.e. they put in enough time to reach the top. Environments which are good places to work and fulfill individuals are the sort where women are likely to stick around long enough to become corporate leaders in the true sense.

In Conclusion

My concluding argument is that today's generation is not complaining about discrimination and unfair treatment. Policies on diversity, affirmative action, inclusion have created frameworks where the overt rules of engagement are being rewritten. The “Men’s Clubs” allowed women in and the women took over the running of the club, built their own networks and redesigned the spaces for their comfort. As the numbers increase many predict that it's only a matter of time before the statistics change.

The issue however as I see it is larger than just the numbers. The world today and gen Y in this world, both men and women, have very different expectations of their life. Leading a balanced, fulfilling life, having time for hobbies and interests, a life other than work, and doing work that is meaningful and satisfying is a demand not just for the women, but also for the men. With increasing prosperity, it's not earning your bread that's relevant, not being the bread winner, but the quality of the bread, and whether you have time to savor it. The shortage of talent is so endemic that companies cannot afford to lose trained and capable employees, and need to look at creating ways to attract talent, whatever the gender. In such circumstances companies have to look at creating work places that are respectful of all, where trust, pride and camaraderie are fostered, and where empathy, and coaching are the order of the day.

Individuals who understand this, who replace a command and control approach with a transformational leadership style are likely to be the leaders of the future. In such an arena, the playing field is a more level one. The rules of the game are not determined by gender bias, and hence the best human, not man or woman, is likely to win.
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

GOWRISHANKAR MATANGI

Abstract

There is a need for a paradigm shift in the way organizations look at the subject of creating a diverse and inclusive workforce. The business case for diversity is driven off the fact that the buying decisions are no longer following a standard pattern and are certainly not gender specific - with both men and women being significant players. Equally, talent and capabilities needed to succeed in business exist in both men and women. Thus, corporates need to move away from viewing talent as "men" or "women" and instead look at what diversity of thought, skills and capabilities are needed to win in the market place.

About the author

The author is VP Human Resources Castrol India and Director Human Resources AMESA and Turkey BP Lubricants. She held significant leadership positions in India and overseas in organizations across a wide range of industries. She is passionate about organization development and change management and has successfully led initiatives in these practice areas. She is a core committee member of the Forum for Women in Leadership and is committed to making a difference in the area of diversity and inclusion.

Introduction

Much has been said in recent times on the issue of diversity and inclusion. However, it is obvious that most organizations see this as a flavour of the month and do nothing. Interestingly, best employer studies in India do not even measure diversity and inclusion as a critical element for being best employer. Little wonder that there is scant effort to focus efforts in this area. The truth of course is that organizations that are working carefully and in a structured manner will steal a march in the war for talent in this turbulent and volatile marketplace and be able to build a significantly differentiated culture that will be valued by employees.

A few years ago, Schell Nordstrom of the Stockholm School of business management presented an interesting model at the World Human Resources Congress in Mexico. He called it the "Business of Attraction". His fundamental principle was that whatever sphere of activity we may be in individually or as an organization - we are in the business of attraction - for our products, ideas, services and branding.

Using that concept as a foundation, diversity cannot be a "current fashion statement" - it is a business necessity. I will focus in this article on why success in all spheres is not gender specific, and why organizations need to move away from this dilemma of "should we - should we not" build a diverse and inclusive workforce.

This article is not a feminist tirade about the virtues of bringing in more women into the workforce; it is rather an attempt to
demonstrate that the myths operating against building a diverse workforce need to be explored from a different paradigm.

Life today is not what it was a couple of decades ago and we have shifted so many paradigms - why then do we continue to operate a biased mind in terms of the composition of the work force. The time to be actively progressive is now!

The Changing Face of The Consumer

Any research of the market forces at play today show that buying decisions are made by the discerning consumer - men, women and young people. For instance beauty products and services are no longer the domain of women - men are as interested in beauty treatments and skin lightening products as are women and equally, women are more interested in making decisions regarding what car they drive and the latest digital gadgets. So if we follow the principle of everyone being in the business of attraction - enterprises cannot be successful if men try to think like women and vice versa. It is about understanding the changing dynamics of buying behaviour and the forces behind it.

Innovation

Innovation is not gender specific - it is in fact the result of diverse thought and ideas that coalesce into the one big idea(s) that is game changing. There is this wonderful example of how Nokia changed the game with the basic features - antenna less - "light" mobile phone. In the early days of the mobile telephone craze, market research showed that Nokia was not very popular with women consumers - until one woman employee said that a big bulky phone with a large antenna with a million features does not play to the need to carry a device unobtrusively, which serves the need for emergency contact. As a diverse group of employees worked this problem — the idea was born to change the fundamental design of the phone - and remarkably the product changed the game. The point here is that diversity of thought comes not from the same people thinking differently but different people thinking about a problem in different ways that lead to breakthrough thinking! So if an 82 year old Pope resorts to rap music to attract youngsters to the faith … he is not thinking like a man or woman … he is thinking about how to get the job done in the most effective manner.

Talent and Capability

Though the kitchen might traditionally have been the "female domain" - from time immemorial the bawarchi khanna has been a male bastion … what an excellent example that talent and capability are not gender specific either! There is an old saying which goes "the sum total of talent in any two individuals is the same - the difference between success and failure is how they develop and use it". If we as nation moved away from the notion that professions and business are gender specific, we might actually be able to see talent for what it is and use it effectively to further the cause of "the business of attraction". The most critical consideration must be - how do we use the available resources to create the success stories we need.

With the market dynamics being so different, if our organizations are not focused on building a truly diverse workforce - chances of ongoing success will be limited.

What Work Stands For?

There has been a paradigm shift in how work is seen and what it delivers. Yes, it continues to be a way to put food on the table - but that is not all what it is. It is in fact the means to support a life style. Young and old, new and established, both see life style, and the ability to live life is almost
seen as being more important than focus on "this business of living". Gone are the days when it was "women who followed their husbands", equally men are making career decisions based on what is right for the wife and family.

Within the organization too, the demands of the workforce are around "work life balance" and a "great place to work" - which traditional workforces did not have. So leaders at the helm of affairs who have taken a different journey to get to the top are unlikely to understand and cope with this changing and shifting paradigm. It is likely that they will lose the battle for retention if they do not create an organization which is many things to many people. The desire for a caring, nurturing and energizing workplace is most certainly not gender specific - it is the shifting emphasis of "what work means" of a race that is evolving differently. The game changer will be the ability to learn from diverse perspectives and that cannot come from market research alone - it will come when the different constituencies mingle in the workplace and benefit from the dynamism of interaction and interface.

**Competencies**

Called by whatever terms, the core competencies that are needed for succeeding in any enterprise are results orientation, making wise decisions, continuous improvement and innovation, team work and partnership. Are these competencies gender specific? In fact a variety of research shows that men and women are wired differently and in fact it is the complementary nature of the competencies that make the man-woman force a combination to reckon with.

The man with his hunter gatherer instincts brings to the table a certain focus, skill and capacity. Women with their ability to multi task and nurture, a strong emotional quotient are able to provide the stability and objective thought that helps in the problem solving process. When the man woman combine operates so very well in the home environs, why should it not work in the business environment?

**Retention**

Finally let us consider the issue of retention. The great bug bear of the corporate world is that women are difficult to retain given that their biological condition of child bearing. However, retention is certainly not gender specific. Given the sheer majority of men in the work force - they jump ship to further their careers, they constantly look to achieve beyond their current realities, they sometimes move to be care givers for aged parents, they move all the time. The reality is that women might take a break, but actually return to their organizations post maternity. They feel a great sense of loyalty to the organization and work towards balancing the numerous roles they play.

Smart organizations find a way to make life easy for their employees and make them more productive. The provide flexible working hours, working from home policies, job share roles and create opportunities to maximize ways to nurture employees through their work life cycle.

The journey towards building a sustainable diverse workforce is an arduous one and requires focused energy and commitment. Many organizations use this model effectively to plan, work and ultimately achieve success. A tried and tested model organizations that are really serious about diversity and inclusion will benefit a great deal.
# THE PATH TO AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 0 - Year 3 Early Stages</th>
<th>Year 2 - Year 7 Transitional Stage</th>
<th>Year 7 - Year 10 Inclusive Stage</th>
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<td>Exclusive/Resistant</td>
<td>Reactive→Practive/Responsive→Transformative</td>
<td>Multicultural/Embowered/High Performing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity vision articulated and understood by senior management</td>
<td>Integration of diversity initiatives into business and organizational objectives</td>
<td>Diversity is a habit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>Assessments include perceptual as well as factual data</td>
<td>Entire breadth of diversity spectrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on EEO statistics and profiles</td>
<td>Continued emphasis on compliance</td>
<td>embraced by the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior leadership educated on diversity</td>
<td>Business leaders pro-active in support of diversity; Senior leaders experience multiple motivations for diversity</td>
<td>Culture change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited resources</td>
<td>Increased internal resources invested; reduced usage of external resources</td>
<td>Shift from diversity measures focus to business measures focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early stages of diversity awareness training</td>
<td>Skills-based diversity focused</td>
<td>Champions of diversity at all levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segregation evident; Visible diversity minimal</td>
<td>Increased involvement from all employees</td>
<td>Differences celebrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity viewed as separate from company’s business performance model</td>
<td>Re-balanced recruitment, retention and promotion efforts</td>
<td>Full integration into business model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External litigation</td>
<td>Internal complaints versus external litigation</td>
<td>Superior business performance “Best place to work” attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business performance below competitors</td>
<td>Accountability with consequences, especially for senior and middle management</td>
<td>Increased number of employee resource groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat, letters to management, calls, leaks to</td>
<td>Communication and counting dialogue among all employees</td>
<td>Competence defined technical and interpersonal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal employee resource groups: Affinity groups, advocacy groups, diversity councils</td>
<td>Win/Win mindset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR Systems integration across the entire diversity spectrum</td>
<td>Global mindset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Line-driven initiatives</td>
<td>Continued education and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous development and renewal for diversity leaders and resources</td>
<td>External alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross-functional, cross-cultural involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Diversity Initiative Cummins Inc.

This table above is a pointer and shows in detail the initiatives and work that is involved before diversity and inclusion are truly integrated and a part of the culture. As with most everything real commitment needs to start at the very top. Frankly, there is no point in the Human Resources function trying to establish a Diversity initiative if the Board thinks that it is not a vital business need!

In the final analysis, it is critical that we move away from this great man - woman divide.

The changing demographics suggest that both men and women are successful today in a wide variety of professions, that the environment no longer sees the distinctions. Why then should the corporate world be so divided and so tormented by this issue. The sooner there is acceptance of the changing face of the world; the greater is our combined ability to work towards a more successful future.
There could not have been a better time for corporate India and HR leaders to make a sincere commitment towards building a responsible organization with lasting values - than the present pressures of a high-growth, volatile and talent-driven global market that will reward excellence in innovation, thought-leadership and diversity of cross-cultural engagement.

A critical component of this high-profits and most-admired corporations will be an organization that understands the business case for leveraging the vast talent pool of women in the workforce - and the key role that women are presently playing as customers, investors, employees, producers — and ensuring that their senior management and Boards reflect this highly visible and articulate aspiration in their business strategies in the marketplace.

One of the key differentiators for changing this mind-set in corporate India will be the corporate HR leaders — who will first need to re-define their own roles within the organization for nurturing long-term gains of building talent-pipelines, training and skills — rather than short-term targets of retention, recruitment, and attrition rates, which seems to have become the primary focus of the HR community in corporate India. This will also require the CEOs in corporate India to re-define the "total rewards strategy" in the organization - that will compensate HR directors for building "most-respected" rather than simply a "best-employer" organization.

Defining the Perspectives for Corporate India

There are clearly several different levels on which the senior women executives express their views - which fit into two primary domains:

(a) Their own experiences in the workplace, impacting the organization environment within which they work, advancing their own career paths, breaking into the top-management leadership positions and boardroom access.

(b) Their desire to mentor the successor - generation of executive women in the workforce, guide them on resolving conflicts in the workplace, making their
presence felt, building their aspirations and skills for leadership positions, helping them build work-life balance at the early and demanding stages of their careers.

Organizations will therefore need to take cognizance of this and respond to both these types of needs among the women executives - while planning their strategies for leveraging the talent pool of women in their companies.

While the former will need a sharp and committed focus by the top-leadership team to re-format the organization corporate culture and mind-set to be more receptive to women in top-positions — the later will require good learnings from a cross-cultural sharing of mentoring programs that have worked within organizations that will provide a comfort-zone for women executives to stay within an organization that "cares."

**Ensuring Level Playing Field and Equal-Opportunity**

Senior women executives across-the-board in public, private sector, and MNCs — candidly agree that there is a lack of "a level playing field" in most Indian companies, and a pervasive gender-bias in performance assessments when the top-jobs are being considered for assignment. There was a clear consensus that women executives make an important contribution to the business performance of companies, and women can deliver best in an "environment of respect." Companies need to recognize that leadership skills are "common at the top" — and there is a clear business case for providing equal opportunity and a 'level playing field' in the workplace, if they are to retain the smart women executives in the organization. Far from this being an "emotional issue" — senior women executives recognize this as a "professional leadership" issue — and the focus needs to be on mentoring the Indian corporate mind-set to get past the "subtle glass ceiling" and resolving inequities in the workplace, for leveraging best talent and performance.

HR directors will need to think hard about ensuring that performance-assessments are gender-neutral - and that there are as many opportunities available for women executives to be nominated for advanced learning at distinguished business schools — as their male counter-parts. The same is true for providing line-management critical business experience — as often the lack of this experience stands in the way of advancing women executive careers to top-management positions.

This case could be made for senior women executives serving in manufacturing industries - L&T, Mahindra Group, Tata Steel, Indian Oil Corp., Bharti Airtel, Reliance Industries, Hindalco, Grasim, ACC Cement, GMR Group — and to a much lesser degree in the newer areas like IT, pharma, banking and finance, retail sector, and consumer goods sectors which are much ahead in providing women executives their roles. The increasing focus of manufacturing industries worldwide on the "triple-bottom-line"-like climate change, environmental concerns, education and technology — is encouraging more women executives to join manufacturing industries where the environment has been traditionally unattractive for them.

**Demand Side vs. the Supply Side for Women Directors**

The data for corporate India — generated by various business forums and chambers of — which both insufficient and unsubstantive, clearly indicates that no more than a handful of the top-100 companies in India have a woman director
on their board and as CEOs. Inspite of the fact that 50% of the demographics of India are comprised by women-and women top the most distinguished business schools and competitive national examinations - there seems to be common myth that there are not enough women candidates available who are qualified to become Chief Financial officers, Chief Legal Counsels and Risk Officers, Global Heads of HR, Firm Partners, Internal Auditors, President Business Operations, Chairpersons and Chief Executive Officers. The reality is that traditional Indian mind-sets and corporate cultures appear to be hesitant in moving out of their “comfort-zones” of stereotype identities, and seek to find people “just like themselves” when appointing senior management positions — sometime without fully recognizing this themselves.

It seems that the challenge lies equally on the demand-side of the equation - and there is slow recognition for the high value that diversity of thinking, perception, accomplishment, and innovative ideas that independent women directors can bring to the business performance of the company - aside from the required compliance of an Auditing Committee checklist which seems to be the main priority of market regulators and management boards across all sectors. The real test for corporate governance and risk-management in business India will be when corporate Indian boardrooms are mature enough to realistically reflect the vast and diverse stakeholders that constitute the business environment - and which include women as substantive and key customers, investors, suppliers, employees, and consumers.

The Myth of Work-Life Balance

There is also the further myth in corporate India that women executives find work-life balance a top-priority - and that companies will need to structure some flexible workhours and other special privileges for them. On the contrary, most women executives place the same amount of priority on work-life balance as their male colleagues — and find such attention as being quite negative in their career graphs. They are also not inclined to be seen as multi-tasking, compassionate, or suitable for soft-areas in the corporation, and would like to be assessed solely on their merit and accomplishments within the organizations.

The work-life balance issue seems to be more prominent at the entry or mid-level management of women executives, and in a gender-sensitive organization it can be resolved with adequate best practices and policies. Experience women executives are also most interested in making a contribution to mentoring the successor-generation of women the workforce — both within the organization and cross-industry, and this should be leveraged by the HR Directors in corporate India through building mentoring networks for women employees. It will not be enough to absolve our case for the low number of women in top-management by citing work-life balance issues anymore - and the HR Director must be made fully accountable for the low numbers in top-position in these changing times.

Re-defining Best Employers: Critical Role of the Diversity Officer

The time has also come for corporate India to move away from the check-box approach of best-employer and Great-places-to-work surveys — that rely on a traditional definition of employees aspirations and HR Director deliveries. Much has changed in the expectations of the successor-generation’s priorities, challenges, attention-span, and long-term goals - and HR leaders and CEOs can no longer be satisfied in increasing the number of women in the organization, without
recognizing the critical need to have women in leadership positions - as an important diversity-index of a best-employers company. Best practice companies will need to show an acceptable code of conduct and high mentoring programs for women in the workplace - as well as clear metrics that show a trajectory for career advancement for women in the organization and absence of any bias in providing the required training and premium business-school executive education programs for them.

One good approach would be for best-employer companies to assign a high-positioned and competent diversity executive — who would be independent of the HR function, and who would provide an audit of the HR best practices within the organization to the CEO and the board. This is a best practice followed in several global Fortune 500 companies, and some Indian companies like Infosys, Citigroup India, Tata Consultancy, Satyam Computers, Goodyear India, Agilent Technologies, Coca-cola India — are already way head of the rest in adopting these best practices for best rewards.

**Time for Collective-Thinking**

This would be a most opportune time for women executives across corporate India — from the private sector, public sector, and multinational companies — to come together and begin to build networks among themselves — and also with their male colleagues in their organizations — to roll-out a strong agenda for recognizing their high contribution to business growth and top-leadership. This is also an important time for successful women executives to come forward and make a contribution for providing cross-industry mentoring for successor generations of women that will guide them through their challenges at the workplace, and celebrating every woman executive who gracefully glides through her career and nurtures her home at the same time. However, the highly articulate, sensitive, and efficient women executives in corporate India will be unable to celebrate their well-deserved success stories as long the "glass ceiling" remains at the top - and it will need the collective vision of all business leaders to make a contribution to this important mission.
WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT IN INDIA: STATUS, ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS
LYNDA L MOORE, STACY BLAKE-BEARD, VIPIN GUPTA

Abstract
This article reviews current status of women and their rise to managerial and leadership positions in India. We identify issues pertinent to women’s leadership from research and best practices in Indian, US and global companies, and discuss the gap between current research and present realities specifically as it relates to an Indian context.

About the authors
Dr. Lynda L Moore has focused her research, consulting, and teaching on the leadership and advancement of women, diversity management, as well as cross-cultural difference in organizations. Her articles have appeared in several international Journals. She is the acting director of the Radcliffe Public Policy Institute at Harvard University. Lynda hails from Simmons College School of Management, Boston, MA. and is a faculty affiliate of the school’s Center for Gender and Organizations and Entrepreneurship Program.

Dr. Stacy Blake-Beard is an Associate Professor of Management at the Simmons College School of Management in organizational behavior. She is also Faculty Affiliate at the Center for Gender in Organizations at Simmons and Indian School of Business. Stacy is a MA and a Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology from the University of Michigan. She has also worked at Procter & Gamble and Xerox. Dr. Blake Beard has published research on gender, diversity, and mentoring in several International Journals.

Dr. Vipin Gupta (Ph.D, Wharton) is Roslyn Solomon Jaffe Chair Professor of Strategy at Simmons College, Boston. He is a gold medalist from IIM, Ahmedabad and Principal Co-investigator of the GLOBE program (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness). He is a winner of the coveted 2005 Scott Myers Award for Applied Research. He has published several books, including an eleven volume compendium on culture, gender, and family businesses around the world.
Little research exists to document the issues concerning women business leaders, despite growing numbers of women in the managerial ranks. Given the socio-cultural context of women’s historical roles, importance of family and recent entry into the formal work sector, it is understandable that both research and practice related to women’s leadership is still in an early stage of development.

The experiences of U.S. multinational firms and IT firms suggest that an explicit tracking of the participation of women in the workforce, and at different levels and in different parts of the organization, can pinpoint gender gaps. A review of secondary sources suggests company policies and practices in India are analyzed under three broad categories: recruitment targets, retention through activities such as networks and mentors, and flexible work arrangements and work family policies.

Increasing the number of women in business leadership roles in India will take concerted and strategic effort. Recommendations offered include convening national associations and industry forums to share best practices, working with academic research centers to gather data, and establishing public private partnerships to address the need for educational participation and capacity building.

While women have made great strides in recent years in India, women’s entry and advancement into business managerial and leadership positions is a relatively new phenomenon. However, given India’s tight talent-market, high attrition, and need for professional and world class management skills at all levels, some attempt is being made to understand the potential rewards for gender diversity in companies.

We close with a summary of key findings and recommendations.

**The Context of India**

Women are increasingly assuming leadership positions in the corporate world too apart from political leadership and there are notable examples of those who have shown true perseverance and determination to break the glass ceiling.

Women entrepreneurs presently comprise about 10% of the total number of entrepreneurs in India, with the percentage growing every year. Interestingly, women entrepreneurs have moved from the earlier leadership role of being forced to lead an organization due to the death or incapacity of the primary male owner, to choosing to establish businesses to meet their career goals.

We now provide an overview of research on U.S. women business leaders in order to cite precedence and a comparative framework for women in India.

**What We Know About U.S. Women Business Leaders**

A review of the research on women and leadership in the United States yields a consistent picture. On one hand, women have made steady progress in a number of measures, including labor force participation, employment growth in higher paying occupations, and gains in real earnings recent workforce participation statistics indicate that 59.4 percent of women are in the workforce and they represent approximately 47 percent of the labor force. Women hold 50 percent of managerial, professional and related occupations.

While these statistics indicate some degree of progress, they are countered by a number of figures that suggest that women are still facing numerous barriers. If we examine the highest echelons of the corporate sector (C-suite positions such as chairman, chief executive officer, chief operating officer), only 6 percent are
women only 2 percent of CEOs of Fortune 1000 companies are women. In terms of their representation on boards of directors, the most recent statistics show women holding only 17 percent of board seats (Catalyst, 2008). These numbers highlight the fact that in spite of advances, women are not represented in top leadership positions to the extent that they should be. Women still face a glass ceiling at the highest levels of organizations and the challenges of navigating a labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007) at all stages of their career.

Why Aren't There More Women at the Top?

A number of reasons are offered for the scarcity of women in top leadership position like stereotyping which leads to resistance to women’s leadership, discriminatory treatment that contributes to differential outcomes for men and women, the challenges of dealing with persistent double binds and the demands of work-family integration.

A number of studies have confirmed that when we consider who is a leader, the image that emerges is influenced by a widely shared set of unconscious and conscious associations. In the management literature, there has been an implicit link between masculinity and leadership. Behaviors traditionally associated with effective leadership (autocratic behavior, directiveness, task-orientation, problem-solving ability) are unconsciously attributed to men. In contrast, stereotypical behaviors associated with women are high people-orientation, sensitivity and emotionality. As a Catalyst study (2005) found, men are described as “taking charge” while women are seen as “taking care.” The challenge facing women is that these "stereotypical assumptions and thinking often form the rationale to withhold opportunities from women" (Giscombe, 2007).

Women actually face a set of conflicting messages. If they act in ways that are expected or that are consistent with the gendered stereotypes that constrain their careers, they are not seen as leaders. If they act in ways that confound or are in conflict with gendered stereotypes, they are also penalized. These clashing messages represent double binds that women must navigate as they manage their careers. Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) describe a no-win situation for women leaders: Conforming to their gender-role can produce a failure to meet requirements of their leader role, and conforming to their leader role can produce a failure to meet the requirements of their gender role. In either case, women are perceived as not having what it takes to inhabit powerful jobs. Women's ability to engage in self-promotion is one example of a double bind. Those in leadership are expected to engage in some level of self-promotion; this practice is used to convey status and competence. But women who engage in self-promotion may also be perceived as pushy and aggressive, and may actually be harmed by the same behavior that would enhance the perception of men’s leadership.

Women are also impacted by the demands placed on them as predominant actors in two domains—both work and home. Women continue to be the ones who interrupt their careers, take more days off, and work part-time. As a result, they have fewer years of job experience and fewer hours of employment per year, which slows their career progress and reduces their earnings. While we see the number of hours that men spent on domestic work increasing, women are still the primary inhabitants of the "second shift". On top of the actual hours that are dedicated to managing work-family demands, women are also impacted by gendered expectations about how much they should
be doing in the home. Researchers note that
decision makers may assume that women
have domestic responsibilities that would
prohibit them from taking advancement
opportunities. These assumptions mean
that women are not offered key
opportunities that are perceived as
demanding; in fact, their names are taken
out of consideration in early stages of the
decision making process about who will
gain access to critical career-enhancing
opportunities.

Do Women Fare Better in
Other Countries?
If we expand our scope beyond the United
States and look at the position of women
globally, the picture does not get much
better: barriers to women's entry into senior
management, otherwise known as the
"glass ceiling," exist across the globe, and
it is worse in some areas of the world than
others. Women are 43% of the European
workforce, yet they are still woefully
underrepresented in senior management
positions. In the United Kingdom, women
represent approximately 30% of senior
managers. In a study of 500 senior women
and 132 senior men from 20 countries
across Europe, Catalyst (2002) found that
the barriers reported by respondents were
remarkably similar across the different
regions of Europe. A large percentage of
respondents indicated that the top barrier
to women's advancement in organizations
was stereotypes and preconceptions of
women's role and abilities. As Nancy Adler
aptly observes: About the single most
uncontroversial, incontrovertible
statement to make about women in
international management is that there are
very few of them (Adler, 1994).

Research on Women Managers in India
There is a real dearth of research on women
managers in India. Popular literature and
anecdotal data suggest that they face the
same glass ceiling issues cited above that
women in the US and globally face. The
extant research has provided an overview
of challenges facing Indian women and
looked at role stress, perceptions of
advancement, and impact of gender on
power. Women constitute less than 7% of
senior management leaders in India. A
large percentage of the women who make
it to the top are the inheritors. Less than
2% of all listed Indian companies have
professional women CEOs. Less than 1%
of total professional CEOs in India are
women. According to the findings of a 2005
survey of 149 companies by the
Confederation of India Industry, only 6%
of the total numbers of employees in
medium and large scale industries in India
constitute women, with 18% in medium
and 4% in large companies. Further, study
findings indicated that 16% were at junior
managerial level, 4% each at the middle
and senior levels, and almost nonexistent
in organizational leadership positions.
Redileon, an executive search firm, found
in a study that almost 85% of the women
managers are in supporting roles such as
HR, public relations, and customer service.
The biggest barriers to a woman's career
were stereotyping and preconceptions of
women's roles and abilities along with
absence of bottom line management
(Goyal, 2007).

An examination of board participation in
India also yields grim news. Over 77
percent of the 200 largest companies in the
world, as ranked by Fortune, had at least
one women director on their board as of
2006. Yet, according to the Redileon study,
only 26.1 percent of the listed companies
(392 of 1,500 firms) have a woman on their
boards. Out of the 278 directors on the BSE
Sensex companies, there are only 10
women directors. The low participation
rate of Indian women on corporate boards
is yet another indicator of the weak
involvement of women in visible
leadership positions (Goyal, 2007)

Overall, there has been limited theoretical
and empirical research on the status of
women, their experiences and perceptions, managers’ attitudes, barriers to advancement, and company policies and practices. In the next section we explore several of the socio-cultural reasons explications for the lack of substantive empirical research on women in India.

The Cultural Context for Research on Women Managers in India

An understanding of the cultural context of India provides deeper insights into the socio-cultural reasons for the current status of women and low proportion in management and board representation. Understanding this context will offer some perspective on why there are so few academic studies on women’s leadership in India.

Cross-cultural research studies, such as the GLOBE program, show that Indian society is characterized by a low degree of gender egalitarianism (Gupta, Surie, & Chhokar, 2002). Indian society has traditionally been male-dominated, and a majority of national and social heroes in India have been men. A large majority of women are homemakers, and put their first priority on home-making and child-rearing roles, even as a growing percentage of women are now joining the workforce. Traditionally, having female children was considered undesirable, resulting in incidents of female feticide and infanticide, and adverse female-male gender ratios in the population. An Indian woman commonly followed the wishes of her father as a daughter, the wishes of her husband as a wife, and the wishes of her sons as a mother. Women forums in rural and urban areas, special incentives for the education of the girls including noon meal programs, and growth in the employment opportunities for educated women such as in the call centers. Yet, in the upper and middle class, it is still common for women to give up their jobs after marriage, or after the birth of their first child. Women remain clustered in traditionally feminine occupations such as teachers, nurses, and clerks (Chhokar, 2007).

Philosophical and Organizational Responses in India

In this context, Mehra (2002) identifies three schools of thought on women managers in India. The first school labels women in management to be part of the "boys club" - these women adopt a masculine style of management, take on tough assignments, are assertive and dominating, and sacrifice their family lives. This school holds that women can be effective managers only by behaving like male managers. The second school assumes that both men and women can be equally effective managers, but holds that women have special needs - such as maternity leave, flexible work arrangements and relocation to their partner’s place. The third school posits that women bring special talents and skills to management, including their more interactive, intuitive, and cooperative style of leadership, and the organizations that are sensitive to gender in management are likely to benefit from this diversity.

Gupta (2008) identifies three generations of attempts to address the issue of under-represented women in management and leadership in India. The first generation of issues was defined by the lack of managerial opportunities for women, because of an assumption that they were only capable of holding stereotyped jobs. The second generation issue was the oppression of women using subtle barriers, even in the face of equal opportunity policies. These barriers included a paucity of mentors and role models and traditionally male work norms such as long and rigid hours. The introduction of flexible work hours and other gender-sensitive policies allowed women to enter...
non-traditional jobs and sectors. Yet, the percentage of women in the management positions has remained very low. In the upper and middle class, it is still common for women to give up their jobs after marriage, or after the birth of their first child.

A third generation of issues has now emerged. In response to the shortage of managerial and leadership talent, many multinational enterprises, leading domestic firms, and family businesses are beginning to re-evaluate their policies. Gupta (2008) reports that women managers in India are opposed to the idea of women-specific policies - such policies are seen to demean the accomplishments of the women who have made it to management and leadership positions based on merit. Anecdotal evidence points to the issue that women-focused policies have resulted in a growing new perception amongst Indian men that the gender sensitization policies are not necessary, thus raising the specter of affirmative action "backlash" similar to what has occurred in the US. Therefore in some leading firms of India, the emphasis has been on designing policies that address the need for varying work-life balance over the careers of the employees - women as well as men, managers as well as non-managers. Interestingly, men have become increasingly active users of the flexible work arrangements, and of the options to work from home for one or more days a week (Gupta, 2008). This change corresponds to existing literature which suggests that addressing gender equity also impacts organizational effectiveness (Kolb et al, 1998).

**Additional Organizational Initiatives and Best Practices in India**

Global companies and multinationals have clearly recognized the business case for the important role of women as customers, employees, and investors, and are making strides by appointing a greater number of women executives in senior positions. They also point to research results from SHRM (Society for Human Resource Managers) that indicate that diverse and inclusive organizations show characteristics of improved problem solving, creativity and innovation. Some of the US multinationals have taken initiatives to bring in gender equality and provide equal opportunities for women: most notable among these would be IBM, Citigroup, Shell Group, Unilever, GE Corp., E.I. DuPont, which are many times identified as among the best employers worldwide.

The reported activities appear to fall into three broad categories: recruitment targets, retention through activities such as networks and mentors, and flexible work arrangements and work family policies. Some of the US multinationals in India are giving specific mandates to head-hunting firms to fill middle and senior management roles with women candidates; among them are American Express, Accenture, and IBM. Many also provide referral programs and target women only colleges for recruitment. Coke has a program which recruits women for front end sales functions, and a policy that one of four short listed candidates for senior level recruitment has to be a female. Others such as GE and Motorola provide organizational networks and mentor programs; Sapient uses a role model program to highlight successes of senior women managers. Flexible work arrangements and work family policies also provided by Motorola, Accenture and GE as homes offices are connected to allow new mothers to continue work. GE, Motorola, Cisco and Ford have crèches on campus or partner with outside day care centers. Some have major diversity and leadership development programs which include objectives and metrics to identify, promote and include women as candidates for leadership positions.
Some of the leading Indian companies have begun taking notice of the initiatives of the US multinationals in India, and have designed their own initiatives. HSBC makes a conscious attempt to build a strong female executive pipeline by effectively using the graduate campus trainee program and building databases of successful female candidates in the industry at all levels. They report that getting an understanding into women’s issues allows an organization to retain the much needed, efficient, talented and relatively stable women employees who could have otherwise left, if an all inclusive workplace environment were not offered. Hindustan Lever Limited (HLL) officials track the growth of business leadership trainees by gender and have seen dramatic growth in the numbers of women. This tracking is part of a conscious attempt by the company to increase the number of women leaders that they could groom for the future. They also report women-friendly work policies including a sabbatical policy — where women managers can take a sabbatical of up to five years (can be taken in two intervals). They also provided an opportunity for women to operate on a part-time/consulting basis during their breaks in positions that allow that flexibility.

A company with a high profile for women leaders is ICICI. Six of the women in Business Today’s List of the 25 most powerful women in India are leaders in the company and over 20 women employees are in senior management positions. Interestingly, they identify gender neutrality and meritocracy as key reasons for this. They also report a long history of equality; three of five board members are women and have been with the company over twenty years. They do provide a year off for women post maternity leave, with their job held for their return. They also strive to accommodate transfer requests by women if husbands are posted elsewhere, and the organization has an excellent sexual harassment policy.

The Special Case of IT in India

In the Indian IT industry, women now account for close to 30% of the total workforce and this is expected to go up to 45% by 2010. What is noteworthy is the steady rise of the figures. The figure, according to the Registrar General of India, as in 1981 was 19.7%, which rose to 22.7% in 1991, further rising to 25.7% in 2001.

Recent figures gauged by Nasscom (the trade body and chamber of commerce of the IT-BPO industry in India with more than 1200 members, of which over 250 are global companies from across US, UK, EU and A-Pac.) claim that the percentage of women workers in the IT and ITES sectors in India has risen by almost 18% in the last two years. What’s more, as per experts, the number of women technicians is likely to rise to 50% by 2010. With women having such a large representation in these industries, companies would need to build systems to attract and retain women. The study also revealed that the number of women employees, has gone up from 12-15% to 35% for those companies initiating leadership development programmes. It has also resulted in the increasing number of women joining organizations at the entry level. The same study reveals that maintaining work-life balance alone is not the key priority for senior women executives in corporations; instead, their focus is also on a level playing field for equal opportunity to move into leadership positions.

Leading information technology companies such as Satyam Computer are actively seeking to recruit women; while it has a female workforce of about 20%, the percentage at the leadership level is around 7%. These information technology firms provide for flexible work through part time
work and arrangements to work from home. Infosys with women approximately 30% of work force has built a satellite office in Bangalore for pregnant women and young mothers to spare them the commute to the main office on the outskirts of the city. Infosys has recently also established a Women’s Inclusivity Network to examine issues that women face in the organization. Wipro Technologies, the first company in India to offer telecommuting facilities to women, reports an attrition decline due to extended maternity leave and flexible timing options. Likewise, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) offers reduced hours and extended maternity leaves.

At a recent industry forum initiatives were identified to address the need to recruit and retain women: a mentoring committee, research committee, and scholarships for women, amongst others.

Conclusions and Recommendations

While some initiatives exist in Indian multinationals and corporations, most appear to lack strategic and inclusive goals and objectives. While recruitment strategies are critical for attracting women, retention and advancement policies and programs require more in depth research and integration into business plans to show more than incremental advances for women into leadership. Within India, two very recent forums (Confederation of Indian Industry & NASSCOM Leadership summit) have addressed women’s initiatives. More public platforms that enhance corporate awareness and share best practices and strategies will increase the visibility and top management’s commitment to take a leadership role within their companies, industries and sectors. Given the socio cultural context of women’s historical roles, importance of family and recent entry into the formal work sector it makes sense that both research and practice related to women’s leadership is still in an early stage of development.

To meet the challenges of skilled worker shortages, there is now an increasing emphasis on training, mentorship, and enabling social attitudes, family systems, and organizational structures for women in management. Diversity as a business proposition has been recognized by globally competitive companies. The ability to draw upon a truly diverse workforce is fast becoming a key differentiator of truly global companies, as women’s representation in the workforce has been identified as a factor enhancing a company’s bottom line as well as globally competitive position as employer of choice. Research that clearly identifies the needs of women managers in India in order for companies to recruit, retain and advance them is urgently needed. Rigorous empirical research would provide information and guidance to help increase their representation in the overall labor force and in upper levels.

The experiences of US multinational firms and IT firms suggest that an explicit tracking of the participation of women in the workforce, and at different levels and in different parts of the organization, can pinpoint gender gaps. Some of the gender gaps may reflect subtle assumptions and effects of traditionally masculine organizational norms and policies. In this case, women would need training, role models, case studies, and mentors to be able to navigate and negotiate organizational conditions for their success. Similarly, organizations would need to hire consultants, work with academic research centers specializing in gender in organizations, and designate gender focal points, in order to unearth systematic and taken-for-granted policies that have subtle discriminatory effects. Industry associations may also play a productive role by helping to share best practices
among organizations within the same industry. Finally, national level women's associations may help cross-fertilize knowledge across industries.

Other gender gaps may reflect broader effects of lop-sided participation of women in higher education and in organizations. Here, the organizations would need to engage in capacity building initiatives, such as the recent Indian School of Business Goldman Sachs initiative to provide educational scholarships to women. Independent initiatives are likely to be costly, therefore partnerships among public, private, non governmental, media, and academic sector would be desirable.

By addressing these two types of gender gaps, considerable progress is likely to be made in the representation of women in the managerial and leadership positions in organizations. Women should have the freedom and opportunity to assume these positions, if they so choose. Beyond that one would need seismic shifts in some of the cultural expectations around gender to see women taking on leadership in proportion to their representation in the population. The separation between home and work, which also exists in the US and Europe, is even more acutely experienced in India because of socio cultural gender norms. Given this historical legacy in a collectivist culture, this process of shifting cultural expectations of and for Indian women is unlikely to be easy or quick. Understanding the interrelationship between the business, ethical and social interrelated mandates within India is imperative as the agenda is shaped. Desirable and culturally appropriate solutions must be researched and discussed in corporations and academia in order to move the agenda forward.

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EAST OR WEST, WOMAN IS THE BEST

MONA DONAHOE

Abstract

The article gives a view of the current position of women from different cultures. The author reflects on her own past experience of problems faced and support she received from her husband. Having worked in many countries, the author shares her own perception on the thinking, behavior and attitudes of different cultures. Though the cultures are different the problems that most women face are still remain the same. Today the fight has become a little easier for the woman in the west however ladies in developing countries like India and China are still fighting the battle. She differentiates the western and eastern cultures by studying politics, Bollywood vis a vis Hollywood, the ratio of women who work after marriage and many more interesting aspects.

About the author

Mona Donahoe is the Centre Manager of Bangalore Operations of HSBC- Global Resourcing. Prior to joining HSBC Group Service Centre (GSC) Bangalore, Mona was Senior Vice President, Consumer Collections, Recovery and Credit Underwriting for HSBC Bank USA. She has earlier worked for over 9 years in various capacities with Bank One, USA, specialising in various facets of collections and consumer lending industry.

If you are reading this article, you might have just recovered from an overdose of attention given to flower power and women empowerment, celebrating the World Women’s Day. If the numbers are anything to go by the latest reports releases by the United Nations or the International Labor Organization and other prestigious institutions we still have a long way to go before we proclaim gender equality. No country in the world can argue that they have achieved gender equality. Of course there has been significant progress made in the last two decades and I myself am a product of this flower power generation.

Although I feel privileged to reap the rewards of strong women who have blazed the trail ahead of me, I do not consider myself a feminist. I come from a background where hard work and intelligence had its reward and I was given the confidence by both my mother and father that I could do and be anything I set my mind to. So rarely do I reflect on my success in terms of ‘being a woman executive’. I do however; realize that it is more difficult for some women to reach their aspiration if they didn't have the same upbringing that I did.

How Society Reacts when Husband become Primary Caregiver of the Child?

As an American woman living and working in India, people outside the work environment in particular are often shocked when they meet my husband, my son and I and quickly realize we are in India because of my job and not my husband’s. You can see the wheels churning in peoples mind, because quite frankly some are unable to hide their
curiosity and the questions begin. "Oh, so you work and your husband doesn’t?" "How does your son handle this?" "Do you cook?" "It must be really hard on you." I find it ironic that no one would dream of asking my husband these questions if our personal roles were reversed. However, this is not just an Indian phenomenon. When my son was born, my husband and I made a decision to have one of us stay at home. Because I happened to make more money at the time, he took up the job of primary caregiver for our child. We often encountered the same reactions in the states. Some people assumed he must be lazy and felt sorry for me. The facts were we made the decision as a family and I never for a minute doubted he was working extremely hard everyday. Nor did I for a second feel I was less of a mother than those women who were the primary caregiver. Being a full-time employee doesn’t make you a part-time parent. I have a very strong bond and relationship with my son, and at 13 he is very proud of his mother’s accomplishments.

Does Gender Equality Varies between the West and the East?

Having hopped across the world in my tenure as a woman executive I have made an observation or two about the differences between women manager’s in the West and the East. In my experience living in the sub continent for the longest period of time, I can speak for my kin across the globe and say, that gender equalities vary, but they are very much present, no matter which country you belong to. I work with very strong Indian, Chinese, Phillipino, European, American and Malaysian women. East or West, women across the globe have similar competencies, skill sets, aspirations, efficiency and ambitions to succeed!

Where I see the biggest divide is the society in which one lives and operates. For women in the East the glass ceiling to becoming equal partners with men starts at home. The shocking discrimination by families against girls over education prevents women from getting remunerative work, or equal wages. Today’s career women in emerging markets especially in India, China and other Asian countries are continually challenged by the demands of full-time work and when the day is done at the office, they carry more of the responsibilities and commitments at home. A flexible work-life balance is much easier for women in the West where there is a cohesive partnership in sharing family responsibilities.

The cultural and tradition beliefs are still strongly rooted in most Eastern countries that are a patriarchal society. It is often legitimized, obscured or denied by familial and social institutions. It is seen inappropriate in most Eastern societies for the woman to work after marriage whereas, it is the norm in most Western societies. This empowers women to be self sufficient and self reliant. In the East, if a woman tends to work long hours and is unable to cook for their family she is portrayed in bad light. There have been cases of women being murdered by their own father’s and brother’s under the disgusting excuse of family honor for standing up for their choices. Eastern women carry a lot of guilt and build psychological barriers for themselves as this is the exception and not the norm. I am appalled that we still live in the day and age of female circumcision and mutilation. The importance given to virginity is the reason why female circumcision still remains a very widespread practice. Behind circumcision lies the belief that, by removing parts of girls’ external genitals organs, sexual desire is minimized. This permits a female who has reached the dangerous age of puberty
and adolescence to protect her virginity and therefore her honor, with greater ease. Female circumcision is meant to preserve the chastity of young girls by reducing their desire for sexual intercourse. The traditions of a patriarchal society play its card in building guilt and psychological barriers in the progress.

**Racism, Sexism and Negative Stereotypes at the Work Place**

Majority of young women in the working class report that they have to deal with racism, sexism and negative stereotypes at their work place, which stops them from growing professionally. The entertainment industry doesn’t help their cause either and tends to perpetuate these myths. Images of female bodies are everywhere. Women and their body parts sell everything from food to cars. Be it Hollywood where women are portrayed with no morals or family values or Bollywood where they get stereotyped as the innocent virgin or the vixen. Very rarely do you see women portrayed as strong competitive leaders or as the heroine saving the day.

Popular film and television actresses are becoming younger, taller and thinner. Some have even been known to faint on the set from lack of food. Women’s magazines are full of articles urging that if they can just lose those last twenty pounds, they’ll have it all—the perfect marriage, loving children, great sex, and a rewarding career. Although there has been a steady increase in the number of women professionals over the past 20 years, most mainstream press coverage continues to rely on men as experts in the fields of business, politics and economics. Women in the news are more likely to be featured in stories about accidents, natural disasters, or domestic violence than in stories about their professional abilities or expertise.

Women in politics are similarly sidelined. Inadequate women’s coverage seems to be a worldwide phenomenon. In 2000 the Association of Women Journalists (Association des femmes journalistes - AFJ) studied news coverage of women and women’s issues in 70 countries. It reported that only 18 per cent of stories quote women, and that the number of women-related stories came to barely 10 per cent of total news coverage. If this is the state of affairs in the West the numbers are equally appalling for women in the East.

The White House Project reports that only 9 per cent of the guests on Sunday morning news shows such as Meet the Press and Face the Nation are women, and even then they only speak 10 per cent of the time—leaving 90 per cent of the discussion to the male guests. When well-respected news-show host Greta Van Susteren moved from CNN to Fox in early 2002, she not only had a makeover; she surgically altered her face to appear younger and more "beautiful." When her new show, ‘On the Record’, premiered, her hair was perfectly coiffed and she sat behind a table so that viewers could see her short skirt and legs.

Before her surgery, Van Susteren had been an increasingly visible beacon projecting the hope that women had made progress. You believed that she had made it in television because she was so darn smart, clearly the best legal analyst on the air. However, her surgery symbolizes what many analysts have argued for decades: that the way a woman looks is far more important than what she has to say. Van Susteren "has become a painful reminder of women’s inequality ... Being smart, smarter, and smartest isn’t enough. By trying to become just another pretty face, Van Susteren instead became another cultural casualty."

All advertisers are chasing the elusive 18-to 34-year-old male market. Little wonder that the starring role in two-thirds of TV situation comedies is played by a young
man. Not only are there fewer women in starring roles but shows focusing on a female character tend to be scheduled in "lousy" time slots.

Marketers also need to move from the traditional and adapt to a changing world. The stereotypes of yesteryear do not relate to the woman of today. Nothing could be more blasphemous than this ad which quoted the following for a famed modular kitchen advertisement and was featured alongside the flower brigade articles on Women's Day in an Indian Newspaper “Think woman … think kitchen, have your very own kitchen this woman's day". The irony of the advertisement says it all.

Ideas of what women should look like and how they should act have changed over time. The size 12 sex goddess of the 1950s who spent her on-screen time breathlessly trying to marry a millionaire may have yielded to the trials and tribulations of the neurotic, ultra-thin professional woman. But not much has really changed-both Ally McBeal and the 1950s sex goddess are consumed by their search for a man. Some producers have taken the lead. In the late 1990s, cereal giant Kellogg released an ad campaign for Special K which used pictures of older and larger women, and copy such as "the Ashantis of Ghana think a woman’s body gets more attractive as she ages. Please contact your travel agent for the next available flight." The ads attracted such positive attention that in 1999 they were followed up by a TV campaign.

Winds of Globalization

As we celebrate the International Woman's Day this month, I am contemplating a day when we would not have a need to celebrate one...when we would all be equals no matter which part of the globe you belong to. Today's woman is no feminist, but a global woman who is hellbent on fulfilling her needs and making the world a better place. With the advent of the economic boom, in emerging markets such as India and China, the number of women finding their way to the job market and economic freedom has increased. The winds of globalization have ushered in changes not just for the economy but have also thrown open numerous opportunities for women. We've come a long way, since March 8, 1857 when women textile workers in New York were fired on by the army while demonstrating for a shorter work week. The fact is, I believe, empowered, successful women have given rise to stronger nations, stronger economies and stronger families.

It's not a feminist talking; it's the woman, the mother, the wife, the executive that is me.

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Nasscom .. Entering the boardroom of Future
BOOK REVIEWS

1. THE GIRL’S GUIDE TO BEING A BOSS (WITHOUT BEING A BITCH)

The Girl’s Guide to being a boss (without being a bitch) by Caitlin Friedman and Kimberly Yorio is a down-to-earth guidebook for women in leadership positions. It has used quizzes, personal anecdotes and interviews which helps readers to identify their leadership style. The book addresses issues of how to face being labeled as ‘cold and tough’ when a woman behaves like her male counterpart.

Highlights of this book
– A Fun book
This book uses fun side-bars such as “Celluloid Bitches”, quizzes, check lists and “The Girl’s Guide to Gossip” throughout. There is no heavy jargon and you need not be intimidated to wallop on all the advice to lead, inspire and motivate.

– When you want to be a manager
Since this book shares ideas from leaders and the led, it offers tips on dealing with issues such as taking credit for ideas, managing up to get the promotion, office politics and taking responsibility for mistakes and mirco-management.

– When recently promoted
This book teaches you to be firm but fair. It arms you to get the best out of your team members by being a mentor. So just when your team wonders about your capabilities after your recent promotion, you will breeze through to success.

– A difficult manager
There are heroic and horrid stories in “Good Witch/Big Bitch” boxes of women from around the world who share their lessons of working for a difficult boss. So you are assured that ‘You’re not alone’ and there are women who have seen it all!

– Other tit bits ....
With women from all over the country sharing their experiences, it takes a peep on the challenges and opportunities of being the chick-in-charge. It includes interviews with coaches, human resource directors, other writers, supervisors, the supervised, mediators, and social workers.

Experiences of successful women in similar leadership contexts is commonly known to be advice and assistance. However this book is only good for someone new to the job world and not for others – as it seems common sense! The book makes solid statements without good advice on how to implement their suggestions. For example, many women cry in a tough situation at work, when one should never be seen crying. Right after saying it is a problem, the book offers no suggestions on how to prevent yourself from crying.

By the conclusion of the book, there is an assurance that ‘You’re not alone’ and there are other women who have seen it all. The authors’ goal was to empower women to inspire other women by becoming a role model.

Reviewed by
Rachel Philip, Executive, Exclusive Search Recruitment Consultants, Chennai.
2. NICE GIRLS DON’T GET THE CORNER OFFICE


Nice Girls Don’t Get The Corner Office is a book by Lois P Frankel, Ph.D., the president of Corporate Coaching International, a California based consulting firm that specializes in executive coaching, leadership development and team building.

For every professional women who wants to move ahead but feels caged, Nice Girl’s Don’t Get The Corner Office comes to their rescue. The book describes 101 mistakes that women normally make at work and offers coaching to overcome these problems. We tend to blame our society, our upbringing, the place where we work, the people we work with for our shortcomings but going through this book will help us identify some areas in our personality that needs a change. Certain behaviors that women learn as young girls, habits like couching statements as questions, tilting your head when you speak, waiting to be noticed, pinching company pennies, offering suggestions with a question mark and an apologetic smile may be now holding them back in a world where decisiveness and confidence are important and also where one does not have to worry much about being liked. From entry to executive level a woman should know how to sound, look, act and market herself so that she is not treated like a girl. This book will help women become aware of when and how they are unconsciously damaging their career. The book also has good advice and tips on how they need to replace these behaviors with more effective ones so that they can finally claim the position that they deserve.

Frankel starts of with a self analysis tool that allows a woman to assess herself and identify the areas in herself that needs improvement. Once the reader has found her flaws, she helps them overcome these behavioral obstacles with valid suggestions and attain the levels of leadership and confidence that they desire. The book also has a series of illuminating case histories which help understand the consequences of ones actions. Frankel helps us understand our shortcomings by describing a mistake from real life and then giving coaching tips on how to improve ourselves. Frankel writes that an executive should “Quit being a girl”. She also states that a woman often lives her life the way people around her want her to live rather than living it the way she wants it and towards her fulfillment. Women also often miss opportunities to get career improving assignments or promotions because they are reluctant to showcase their capabilities or hesitant to speak at meetings. The final chapter is dedicated to making her suggestion practical.

However sometimes the book may give women the feel that most of the things that they were taught from childhood was wrong and everything boys were taught was right. Again these aspects of bringing up a girl can be useful when it comes to parenting and motivating a girl child. Women are also asked favors by their peers and superiors at work and often refusing outright might cost you your next promotion. This is again one area where Frankel has run out of suggestions.

Although Frankel is a professional coach, her book shows a coach is not needed. You need to be in control of your career and life, without worrying about the people around you. No parents, no coach, no friends or colleagues are responsible for your situation at work. If you are feeling frustrated by the glass ceiling, if you feel stuck and can’t figure out why you can’t get further in your career, this book is definitely worth the investment. The book is also a good buy for ladies from all fields and not only corporates. It is something to read even if you think that you know it all. It does not matter where you are in your career right now, this book can help you grow professionally and personally. This book is particularly useful for women who work in a male dominated environment where they are struggling to be heard and gain respect from peers and seniors and all those who want to be successful at work. Read the book and follow the tips if you are a woman who is serious about getting ahead in your career and making it to the corner office.

Reviewed by
3. WHAT TYPE OF LEADER ARE YOU?
Author: Ginger Lapid-Bogda

This book is relevant for those who have some experience in using personality typing systems to self-analyze. It uses the nine point Enneagram system to examine leadership styles and behavior patterns. For those who are not familiar with the Enneagram system, it slots personality characteristics into nine different classifications. At the outset the author assumes a certain level of self awareness in the reader when she urges the reader to work out his/her own style in the tool. Once this is accomplished, the book is a treasure trove of insights into one’s abilities, giving the reader some perspective into how those strengths can be leveraged to achieve success in most arenas with particular focus on the work front.

This is not a book to be read casually. There is a logic in the many patterns and it needs concentration and a level of interest in the subject to be functional. The author has successfully linked the Enneagram system to seven leadership competencies – which she has identified as follows: Drive for Results, Know the Business, Excellence in Communication, Making Optimal Decisions, Leading High Performance teams, Taking charge of Change and at the core of all of these – Striving for Self-Mastery. She has taken each of these competencies perceived as essential to being a successful leader, and aligned them to each of the Enneagram styles. The research has been thorough and has resulted in a publication that will enable the layman to use this complex tool in identifying and leveraging strengths as well as areas that require development. However, this is not for the faint of heart or those not yet at a certain level of self awareness.

Dr. Lapid-Bogda has broken down the components of each of the Enneagram styles and each of the leadership competencies to demystify the sometimes daunting complexity of the tool. She has put down pitfalls within strengths as points to consider and areas to work on. She has managed to do this in a constructive manner without scaring off those who may not want to face attributes that could be causing issues at work.

I would recommend this book to those who are already in leadership roles and who are looking at self awareness and growth while leveraging their strengths.

Reviewed by
Cauvery Devika Dharmaraj, Head HR, MM Imagine Technologies.

4. EVEOLUTION – THE EIGHT TRUTHS OF MARKETING TO WOMEN
By Faith Popcorn & Lys Marigold
Publisher: Hyperion, Friday, March 1 2002 ISBN - 078688441X

Faith Popcorn & Lys Marigold have given an exceptionally good read through her book “EVEolution” dealing with the rise of women as customers. This book deals with a few research based truths in marketing to women. Published by Hyperion first in 2000, this book has been on the best sellers’ list since then. Although it sounds like a very marketing-oriented book (and it is!), it indeed is a very powerful book for understanding the rise of women as key customer segment that no longer anyone can ignore. So much that I would say that the authors make a compelling case to change the clichéd saying all these years that the Customer is the King! Once you read this book, you will realize that the truth pendulum has swung full circle to drive home the point that the Customer is actually the Queen!
Let me summarize here the 8 truths around marketing to women that the authors bring out very succinctly based on years of their research into the buying behavior and power of women folks:

1. When you connect female customers to one another actually helps to connect them to your brand. Very successful brands have enhanced their brand appeal to women by connecting them to each other. *Waitwatchers*, for example is a case in point.

2. Women actually lead multi-lives and marketing to only one of them means you are leaving the others. Therefore, it is necessary in the marketing efforts to help them integrate their lives more fully.

3. Concept of Anticipatory Marketing. This calls for anticipating what women customers would ask for rather than waiting for her to ask! Particularly important because women are less likely to complain and more likely to switch their brands!

4. Women are less prone to act impulsively and therefore are less persuaded by the madness of the modern advertising tactics. Women pay attention to details and the subtle surrounding features that comprise a message. Authors call this as *Peripheral marketing*.

5. Corporations must go all out to earn the loyalty of the women customers. Authors say it loud and clear when they say “*walk, run, go to her and secure her loyalty forever*”. Another prescription here is “*make it ultra-easy for women to obtain a product or service*” as a means to secure their brand loyalty forever. Example quoted here is streamline.com, an on line grocery home-delivery service.

6. Authors introduce another interesting concept called “*Brand-me-down*” when it comes to women customers. Mothers introduce brands to daughters and so on. This generation of women customers will lead you to the next.

7. “*Co-parenting*” is yet another concept that authors recommend when it comes to building and raising a brand. According to them, involving women customers in building a brand goes a long way in making the brand last. A great example how GE Financials as they devised services meant for business women.

8. The final truth authors bring out is “*everything matters*” and that you cannot hide anything with a woman! It is worthwhile to keep in mind that women notice everything and everything contributes to building the image of the brand in the minds of women customers.

Authors have made a powerful case study of Revlon Inc, a Company in trouble these days. They make a case that Revlon can be turned around by applying the 8 truths of marketing envisaged in their book. Written in a very highly readable style, there is also no dearth of humour in the book.

Women have risen in all walks of life. Women make great managers (Business Week, November 20th, 2000). *Rosabeth Mass Kanter* of Harvard Business School confirms this when she said: “Women get high ratings on exactly those skills needed to succeed in global information age : teamwork & partnering”. Personnel Decisions International (PDI) looked at a sample of 58,000 managers and found women outranked men in 20 out of 23 areas! So, there is more and more evidence that women have arrived and on merits! Faith Popcorn’s EVEolution is a book that brings out just one dimension of the rise of women power, as Customer and Consumers!

I recommend this book for it provides a kaleidoscopic perspective of women and their unique strengths from a holistic perspective although the theme of the book is how to market successfully to women as Customers.

**Reviewed by**

C. Mahalingam (Mali), Executive Vice President & Chief People Officer with Symphony Services Corporation.